

pdc

TERROR



JULY
1971
50¢

TALES

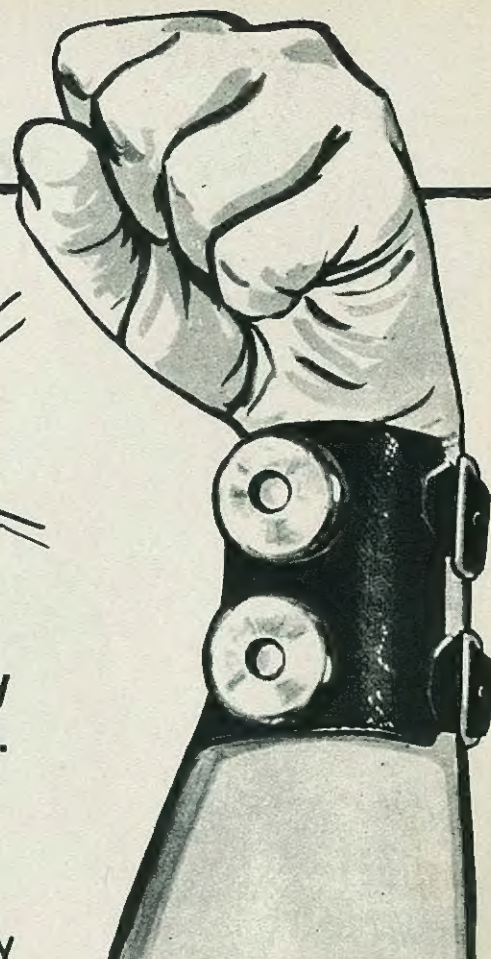
FEATURING:
THE TERRIFYING HORROR
OF
THE TOMB

THE BLACKEST CURSE OF
OF THEM ALL
THE UNKNOWN

A BLOOD DRAINING
MASTERPIECE
**HOUSE OF
WORM**



Develop Fearsome Defensive **POWER** With Weighted Wristlets



**"Power Packed" Arm Builders Start Instantly
To Give you mighty striking power and strength.**

"Power Packed" wristlets build the powerful arms you want without special equipment or exercises. Just wear these rugged lead weighted wristlets during your ordinary activities at work or play.

ONLY
3⁹⁸

Reinforce Your Power Build Your Strength

Silently, unconsciously, hour by hour, day by day the muscles in your arms are strengthened and grown to new power. Just wearing your "Power Packed" wristlets will give you the proud masculine feeling that says "I can take care of myself."



Money Back Guarantee

Order your "Power Packed" lead weighted wristlets today. Use them for 10 days. If you don't see immediate and progressive improvement in the size and strength of your arms; If you don't instantly feel more powerful, more masculine, more capable—you can return them for refund of the full purchase price.

* Div. Mail Sack, Inc.

10 DAY FREE TRIAL

Power Builders * Dept. 14718
1044 Northern Blvd., Roslyn, N. Y. 11576
Rush me my "Power Packed" weighted wristlets by return mail on your money back guarantee

☐ I enclose \$3.98 plus 35c for postage and handling: send one
☐ I enclose \$6.98 plus 55c for postage and handling: send a pair
☐ Send me COD ☐ one "Power Packed" Wristlet
☐ A pair of Power Packed Wristlets. I enclose \$1.00 good will deposit and will pay the balance due on delivery plus postal and handling charges. Same guarantee either way.

Name

Address Zip

TERROR TALES

CONTENTS FOR JULY 1971

Vol. 3 No. 4

- THE TOMB** 4
A terrifying tale of a bloodthirsty and insane emperor who calls upon the rotting corpses to enforce his reign of evil. Ye-ech!
- THE SKULL SCAVENGER** 11
The incredible and weird account of a man who violated graves and disturbed the dead in his search for a locket. A real shocker!
- HOUSE OF WORM** 19
A terror-packed story of the slimy, crawling things that make the living fester with rot. Who said worms are good bait for fishing?
- THE UNKNOWN** 27
Those who wore the ancient and cursed Egyptian garment were doomed to torture beyond human endurance. Death was the only way out and they welcomed it with open arms. Ugh!
- HORROR ISLAND** 34
A lush, quiet island becomes a nightmare of horror for an escaped murderer. H-help!
- STRETCHING THINGS** 40
The pulsating shock of a man with brittle bones that become elastic with the aid of a new medicine. This is a spine-snapper!
- IDOL OF EVIL** 45
A fetid, decaying temple lures the greedy gold hunters who find only the wrath of the Idol of Evil. Stop you're choking me! Arrgh!

CARL BURGOS, Editor

IRVING FASS, Art Director

EZRA JACKSON, Art Editor

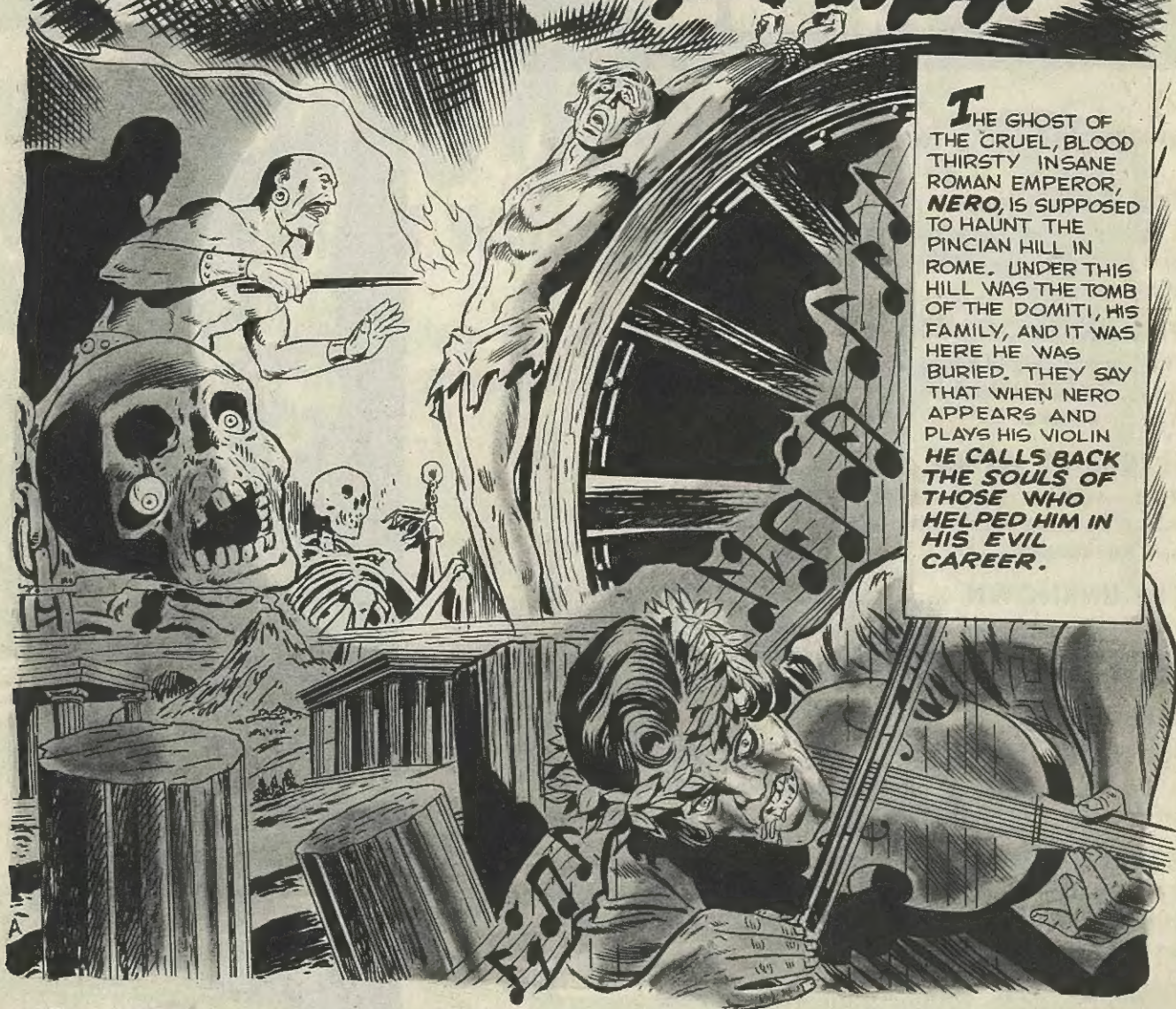


TERROR TALES IS PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY EERIE PUBLICATIONS, INC., 222 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10003. THE PUBLISHER ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNSOLICITED MATERIAL. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO PERSONS LIVING OR DEAD IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. COPYRIGHT 1971 UNDER UNIVERSAL COPYRIGHT CONVENTIONS. SINGLE-COPY PRICE 50¢. APPLICATION TO MAIL AT SECOND-CLASS RATES IS PENDING AT NEW YORK, N. Y. PRINTED IN U.S.A.



THE TOMB

THE GHOST OF THE CRUEL, BLOOD THIRSTY INSANE ROMAN EMPEROR, **NERO**, IS SUPPOSED TO HAUNT THE PINCIAN HILL IN ROME. UNDER THIS HILL WAS THE TOMB OF THE DOMITI, HIS FAMILY, AND IT WAS HERE HE WAS BURIED. THEY SAY THAT WHEN NERO APPEARS AND PLAYS HIS VIOLIN HE CALLS BACK THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO HELPED HIM IN HIS EVIL CAREER.



AT A SMALL CAFE IN ROME, MARK WAYNE HAS STRUCK UP AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH A PRETTY ITALIAN GIRL ...

WHAT BRINGS YOU TO ROME, SIGNORE?

UNTIL I MET YOU, I HAD NO IDEA WHY I WAS HERE. IT WAS A SUDDEN IMPULSE ... AND TO MY OWN SURPRISE I FOUND MYSELF BUYING A BOAT TICKET TO ITALY!



MY FATHER WILL BE PLEASED TO MEET YOU!

I SEEM TO HEAR A VIOLIN PLAYING! BUT I SUPPOSE THERE ARE MANY STREET MUSICIANS IN ROME!



IT IS VERY NICE
OF YOU TO BE
SO HOSPITABLE
TO A STRANGER.

YOU DO NOT SEEM TO BE A
STRANGER TO ME,
SIGNORE. I AM VALONIA.
VALONIA DIRITTO!



WELCOME TO THE
VILLA DIRITTO,
SIGNORE!



HEY—
WHAT'S
ALL
THIS?



VALONIA!
WHO ARE
THESE GUYS?
WHAT'S THE
GAME?

YOU ARE **VERY BRAVE**,
MARK WAYNE — BUT YOUR
STRUGGLE IS **USELESS!**



WE'LL
SEE
ABOUT
THAT!



THAT TAKES CARE OF ALL
BUT **THIS ONE** — BUT
WHERE DID THEY GO?
THERE'S **NOTHING** LEFT
OF THEM BUT THE
ARMOUR!



I'LL HAVE A LOOK **BEHIND**
THIS THING — GREAT SCOTT!
A SKELETON!



I DON'T GET IT!
AND NOW HE'S
DISINTEGRATED
—JUST A HEAP
OF ARMOUR LIKE
THE REST!

THERE ARE MORE—
MANY MORE, MY
BRAVE ONE! DO
YOU THINK YOU CAN
CONQUER THEM
ALL?



TOO MANY—
MY HEAD'S
STARTING TO
SPIN!



TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY HIS ATTACKERS, MARK
WENT DOWN. WHEN HE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS...

WHAT KIND OF A
NIGHTMARE
IS THIS?



THIS IS MY
FATHER—
DIRITTO!

WE HAVE
BEEN
EXPECTING
YOU! DO YOU
RECOGNIZE
ME, MARCUS?

I **NEVER** SAW
YOU BEFORE IN
MY LIFE,
MISTER— AND
I HOPE I
NEVER SEE
YOU AGAIN!
AND THE NAME
IS **MARK**—
MARK WAYNE!



YOU WERE **MARCUS** WHEN
YOU PUT THIS BRAND ON MY
FOREHEAD — AND ONE
LIKE IT UPON THE BROW OF
MY DAUGHTER! YOU WERE
MARCUS — A *RELATIVE* OF
THE HATED **NERO!**



AGAIN,
MARCUS—
YOUR
BRAND!

DIRITTO,
IT LOOKS
LIKE A
CASE OF
**MISTAKEN
IDENTITY!**
I **NEVER**
SAW EITHER
OF YOU
BEFORE
TONIGHT!



DIRITTO ISSUED AN ORDER TO A SINISTER
CREATURE WHO STOOD BESIDE A FLAMING
FORGE...

OUR GUEST NEEDS
HIS MEMORY
REFRESHED,
BEELI!

YES, MASTER...



A LITTLE TRIP
FOR YOU, MARCUS!

NO—NO!



THE MAD, WILD, DIZZY SPEED OF THE WHEEL,
AND HIS BODY TURNING WITH IT... THE SOUND OF
HIS OWN SCREAMS...



AND THROUGH THE SCREAMS, THE
STRANGE, SCRAPING SOUND OF A
VIOLIN THAT HE HAD HEARD BEFORE...



THEN SUDDENLY A SCENE APPEARED...

A NEW BUNCH OF SLAVES, MARCUS. SOME OF THEM
FOR THE GLADIATORIAL GAMES — SOME FOR THE
LIONS TO TEAR APART — OTHERS TO BURN IN MY
GARDEN TO LIGHT MY PARTY TONIGHT!



IF THERE ARE ANY YOU WANT
FOR YOURSELF — PUT YOUR
BRAND UPON THEM AND
KEEP THEM!

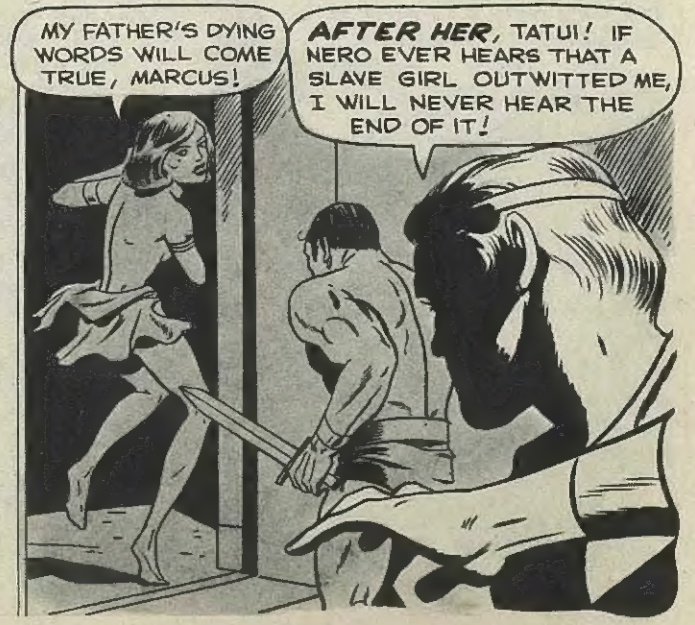


THANK YOU, MY COUSIN,
YOU ARE MOST GENEROUS.
I WILL SEND THEM TO
THE DUNGEONS!



NO... NO... IT COULDN'T BE...
AND YET... I SEEM TO SEE
IT ALL NOW... AND MORE...





SHE WILL TRAP
HERSELF IN THE
TOWER!



DO NOT BE A
FOOL, VALONIA!
DOWN THERE
ARE THE LIONS!

I WILL SAVE YOU THE
TROUBLE OF THROWING
ME TO THEM, MARCUS!



THE DESPERATE SCREAM OF THE GIRL
SUDDENLY BECAME HIS OWN AGAIN ...



NOW YOU REMEMBER, DO YOU NOT,
MARCUS? THE SOUL THAT DWELT
IN MARCUS, THE ROMAN, HAS NOW
BECOME THE AMERICAN, MARK
WAYNE! FOR THE FIRST TIME
DOWN THROUGH THE AGES YOU
SOMEHOW HEARD OUR CALL, AND
WERE UNABLE TO FIGHT AGAINST IT!



UNTIL THE CURSE
PRONOUNCED UPON YOU
HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT,
MY DAUGHTER AND I MUST
CONTINUE TO RETURN TO
THIS EARTH.

BUT NOW, MARCUS,
WE THREE ARE
TOGETHER AGAIN —
AND OUR POSITIONS
ARE REVERSED!



NOW YOU
SHALL
WEAR
THE MARK
OF
DIRITTO!

NO! NO! NO!



THE GRINNING, LEERING FIGURE
CAME NEARER AND NEARER...

HEEE... HEEE...



NO... IT'S **CRAZY**! MAYBE I WAS MARCUS
IN THAT DARK AGE SO LONG AGO... BUT
WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO PAY FOR **HIS**
CRIMES? I'M DIFFERENT! I'VE
CHANGED! THOSE WERE BARBAROUS,
UNCIVILIZED TIMES!



A DOOM ONCE PRONOUNCED
MUST BE FULFILLED... NOW AT
LAST, MY DAUGHTER AND I
SHALL FIND **REST**!



YOU SCREAM FOR JUST A MOMENT, MARCUS...
BUT NERO HAS SCREAMED FOR ETERNITY!
ONLY WHEN HE COMES BACK TO LURE
OTHER SOULS TO THE VENGEANCE WAITING
FOR THEM DOES HE HAVE ANY REST!



THEN THE SCREAMS FADED...
AND WHEN MARK WAYNE AWOKE...

I THOUGHT
I HEARD A
SCREAM!
LOOK!

WHAT
IS THIS?



A **BRAND**! ON HIS
FOREHEAD! WHEN WILL
THESE AMERICANS
LEARN TO STAY OUT
OF THIS PART OF
TOWN!



THE NEXT DAY MARK WAS ON
HIS WAY BACK TO AMERICA...

IT **WASN'T** A NIGHTMARE!
I'LL WEAR THIS BRAND THE
REST OF MY LIFE! HOW
SHALL I EXPLAIN IT? WHO
WILL BELIEVE ME IF I TELL
THEM OF MY HORRIBLE
EXPERIENCE? **AND YET
IT HAPPENED!**



THE UNKNOWN

DEMONS! DON'T
TAKE MY LIFE
LIKE YOU
DID THE
OTHERS!

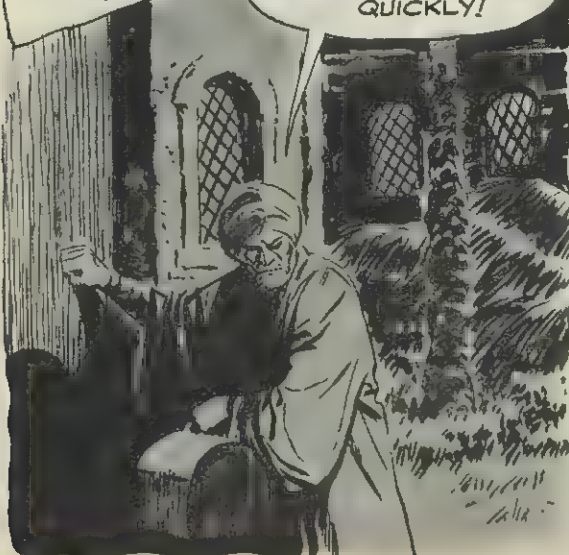
GOOD GRIEF...
THAT MAN
IS MAD!



IT WAS A COLORFUL EGYPTAIN GARMENT... AND
TO ALL THOSE WHO WORE IT AN ANCIENT CURSE
CAME TO LIFE TORMENTING ITS VICTIMS WITH
SUCH INDESCRIBABLE HORROR THAT THEY
WELCOMED DEATH WITH OPEN ARMS!

A FURTIVE FIGURE
NERVOUSLY KNOCKS
ON A TERRACE
DOORWAY...

HURRY, MR.
MASTERSON! OPEN
THE DOOR QUICKLY...
QUICKLY!

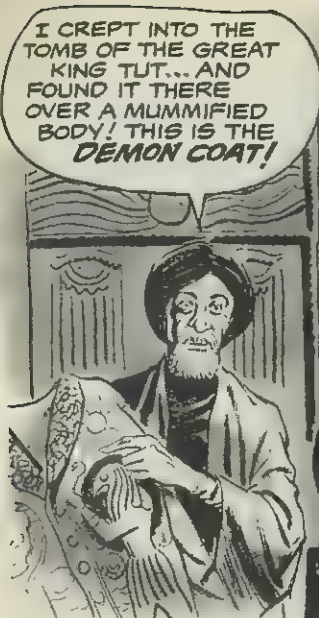


FINALLY, THE DOOR IS OPENED...

SO IT IS YOU,
ANNAR! WHAT
BRINGS YOU HERE
AT THIS HOUR
OF NIGHT?

MR. MASTERSON! I
HAVE UNEARTHED THE
GREATEST COLLECTOR'S
TREASURE OF ALL!





I CREPT INTO THE TOMB OF THE GREAT KING TUT... AND FOUND IT THERE OVER A MUMMIFIED BODY! THIS IS THE **DEMON COAT!**



KING TUT'S DEMON COAT! FANTASTIC!



BECAUSE I AM A COLLECTOR OF IMPORTANCE IT WAS GREEDY OF YOU TO SEEK ME, ANNAR! HOWEVER, IT IS A RARE AND BEAUTIFUL EGYPTAIN PIECE...



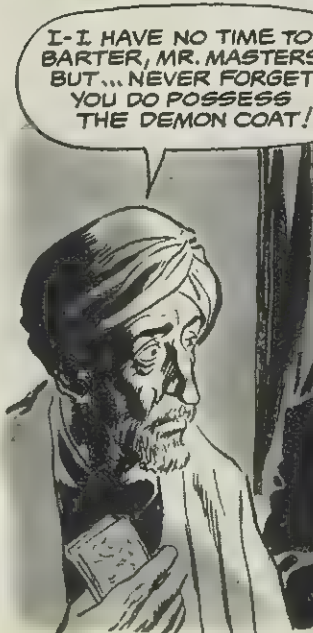
I TELL YOU THIS IS THE DEMON COAT... AT THIS MOMENT KILLERS OF THE SACRED CAIRO SOCIETY SEEK ME!



BUT I OUTWITTED THEM! PLEASE, I ASK ONLY TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR IT! PAY ME QUICKLY!



HA! YOU'RE A DEVIL, ANNAR! I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE HUNDRED FOR THE COAT'S BEAUTY AND FIVE HUNDRED MORE FOR YOU WIT!



I-I HAVE NO TIME TO BARTER, MR. MASTERSON! BUT... NEVER FORGET... YOU DO POSSESS THE DEMON COAT!



BE GONE, YOU SLY RASCAL! HA, HA!



ANNAR'S FRIGHTENED EYES SCAN THE FOLIAGE AS HE LEAVES!

HE COMES!

ALAS! HE HAS DISPOSED OF THE SACRED COAT! QUICKLY...



DISPOILER OF THE TOMB!

INFIDEL!



SLAY HIM BEFORE WE ARE DISCOVERED!

LET THE COAT SEEK ITS OWN VENGEANCE AGAINST THOSE WHO HAVE DEFILED IT!

AND A WEEK LATER, COLLECTOR JOHN MASTERSON SAILS TO NEW YORK!

JOHN, WHY NOT WEAR THAT LOVELY EGYPTIAN COAT FOR OUR TURN ABOUT THE DECK!

I'D LOOK LIKE SOME SORT OF THEATRICAL PERFORMER IN THAT THING!

DON'T BE SILLY, DEAR! IT'S JUST THE THING FOR SHIPBOARD--

HA, HA! ALL RIGHT... MAKE A FOOL OUT OF ME, AGNES!

BUT, AS JOHN MASTERSON STEPS ON DECK CLOTHED IN THE ANCIENT GARMENT...

G-GOOD GRIEF! AGNES! W-WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU! YOUR FACE!

JOHN WHAT'S WRONG?



ABRUPTLY, A SHRILL, OMINOUS WAIL FILLS MASTERSON'S EARS! AGE OLD DEMONS SPEW FORTH FROM THE DECK...

PANIC DRIVES THE DEMENTED COLLECTOR ACROSS THE DECK LIKE SOME STRANGE MADDENED CREATURE...

AAIIIEEOO

YAAA! STOP! STOP! I CAN'T BEAR IT!



M-MERCY! MERCY! MUMMIES! DEMONS FROM THE TOMBS!

I-IT WAS GHASTLY! H-HE SCREAMED OF MUMMIES AND TOMB DEMONS AND... AND LEAPED OVERBOARD! ;SOB!; ;SOB!;

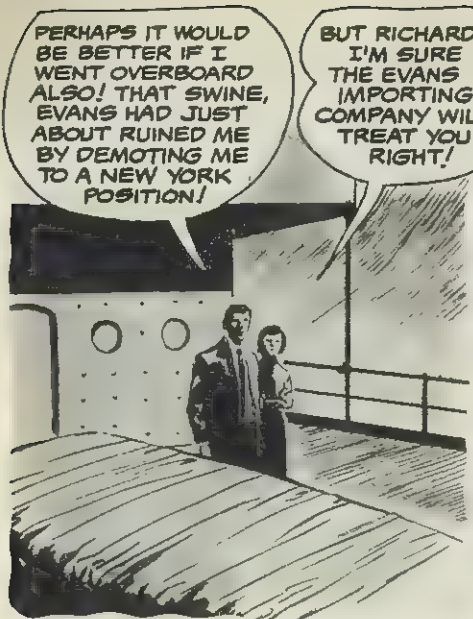
STEADY! MRS. MASTERSON! TRY WE'LL TRY TO FIND HIM!

H-HE HAD JUST PUT ON A RARE EGYPTAIN COAT W-WHEN IT FIRST STARTED... ;SOB!; ;SOB!;

HOW TERRIBLE, RICHARD!

COLLECTING ALL THOSE WEIRD EGYPTAIN PIECES MUST HAVE TURNED HIS MIND!





PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I WENT OVERBOARD ALSO! THAT SWINE, EVANS HAD JUST ABOUT RUINED ME BY DEMOTING ME TO A NEW YORK POSITION!

BUT RICHARD, I'M SURE THE EVANS IMPORTING COMPANY WILL TREAT YOU RIGHT!

ROT! WHY, ANN YOU'RE COLD!

I AM A BIT CHILLY, RICHARD! I'LL GO BACK FOR A COAT!



SUDDENLY, RICHARD BURKE'S EYES FALL ON THE COLORFUL COAT OF EVIL AND...

SAY THERE'S A COAT OF SOME SORT RIGHT HERE! SLIP IT ON ANN-- I'LL RETURN IT TO THE LOST AND FOUND LATER!

GOODNESS! THIS MUST BE THE COAT MR. MASTERSON HAD ON-- IT LOOKS EGYPTAIN!



ONCE AGAIN THE DEMON COAT FINDS A MODERN BODY... AND ONCE AGAIN FORBIDDEN EVIL FROM THE PAST IS UNLEASHED UPON ITS WEARER!

RICHARD! RICHARD! OVER THERE... A MUMMY! STOP IT!

A-ANN!



THE UNSPEAKABLE HORROR MOVES FORWARD!

NO, NO! I-IT'S COMING FOR ME! YI-I-I! THEY ARE DEMONS, RICHARD! DEMONS!



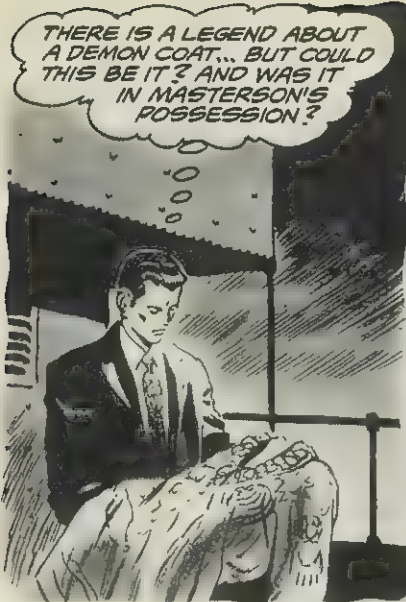
... AND EMBRACES ITS VICTIM!

EEEEEEE!

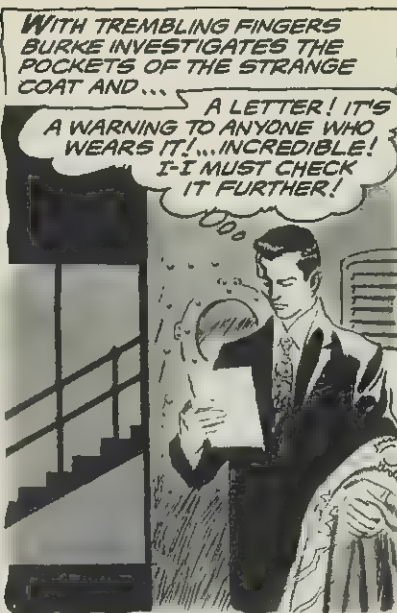


THEN!

S-SHE'S DEAD! GOOD GRIEF! SHE-- DIED OF FRIGHT! A-AND THIS COAT-- SHE SHOUTED THE SAME THING MASTERSON WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE CRIED... MUMMIES... AND... DEMONS!

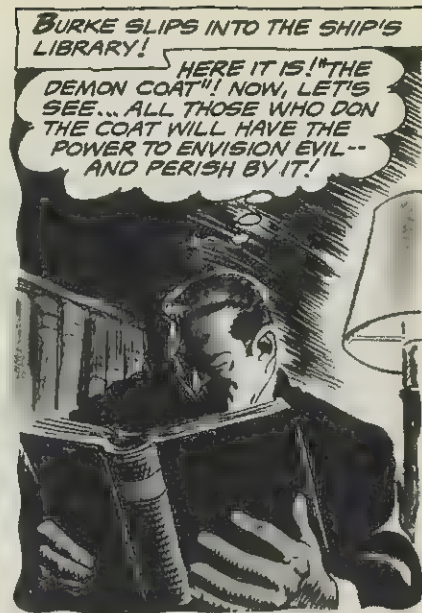


THERE IS A LEGEND ABOUT A DEMON COAT... BUT COULD THIS BE IT? AND WAS IT IN MASTERSON'S POSSESSION?



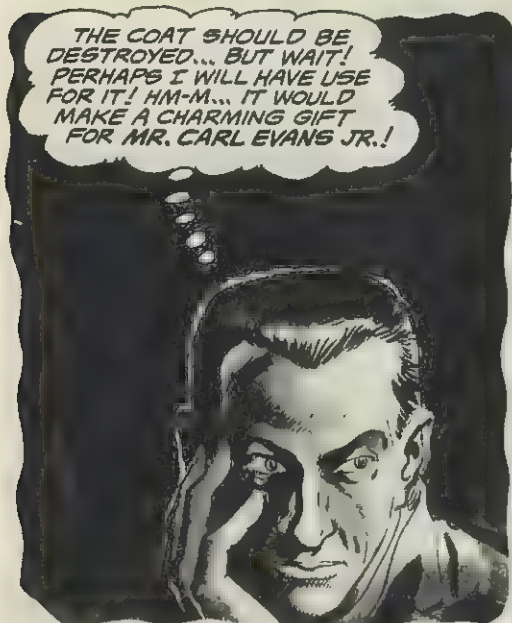
WITH TREMBLING FINGERS BURKE INVESTIGATES THE POCKETS OF THE STRANGE COAT AND...

A LETTER! IT'S A WARNING TO ANYONE WHO WEARS IT!...INCREDIBLE! I-I MUST CHECK IT FURTHER!



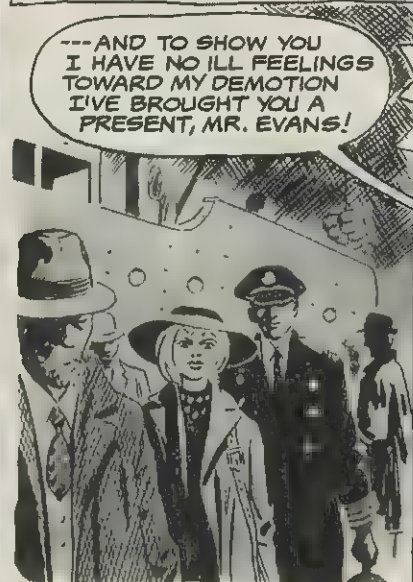
BURKE SLIPS INTO THE SHIP'S LIBRARY!

HERE IT IS! "THE DEMON COAT"! NOW, LET'S SEE... ALL THOSE WHO DON THE COAT WILL HAVE THE POWER TO ENVISION EVIL-- AND PERISH BY IT!



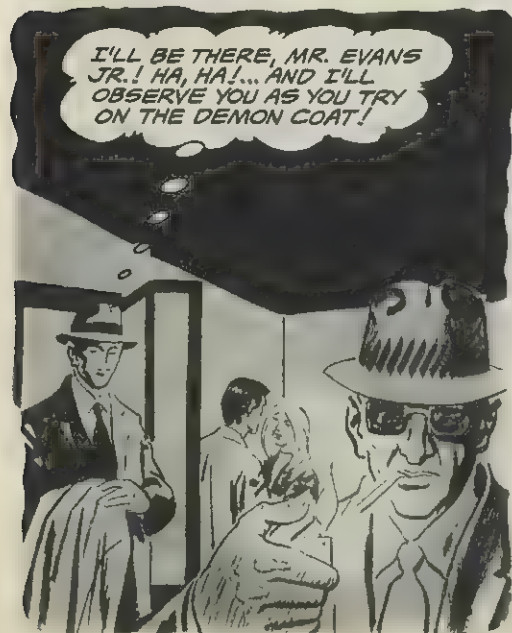
THE COAT SHOULD BE DESTROYED... BUT WAIT! PERHAPS I WILL HAVE USE FOR IT! HM-M... IT WOULD MAKE A CHARMING GIFT FOR MR. CARL EVANS JR.!

HIS MIND POISONED WITH REVENGE, RICHARD BURKE HURRIED TO A TELEPHONE UPON DOCKING IN NEW YORK!



---AND TO SHOW YOU I HAVE NO ILL FEELINGS TOWARD MY DEMOTION I'VE BROUGHT YOU A PRESENT, MR. EVANS!

IN APPRECIATION OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDE I INSIST YOU HAVE DINNER AT MY PLACE! I'LL EXPECT YOU AT EIGHT SHARP!



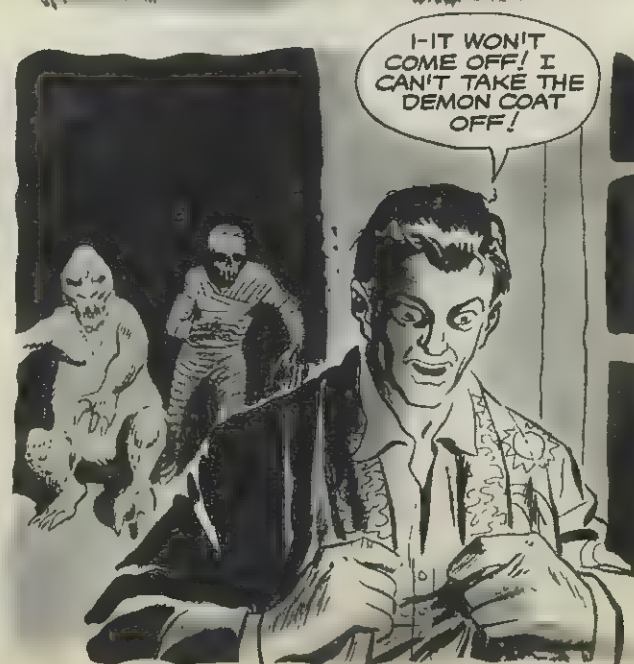
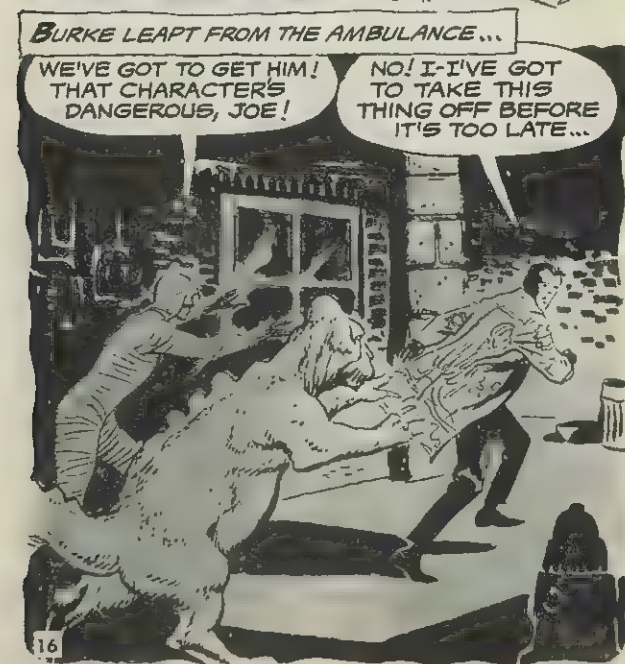
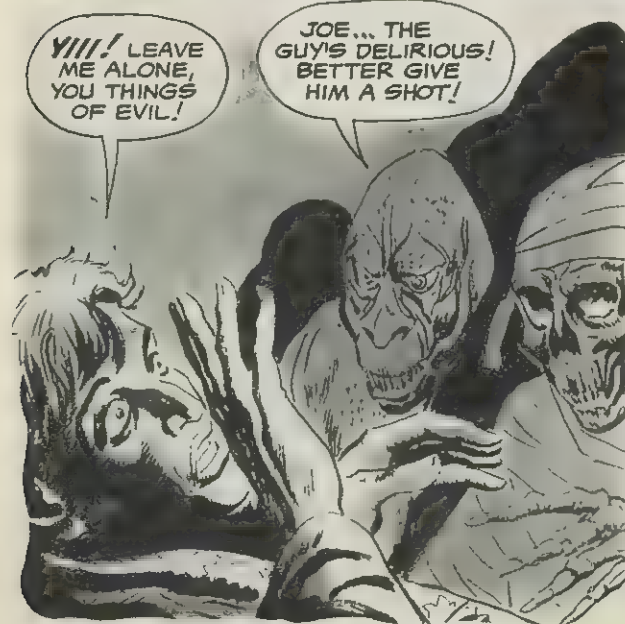
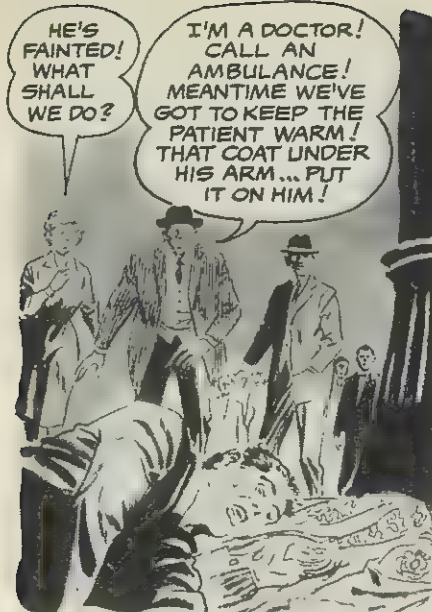
I'LL BE THERE, MR. EVANS JR.! HA, HA!... AND I'LL OBSERVE YOU AS YOU TRY ON THE DEMON COAT!

RICHARD BURKE'S PULSE BEAT WITH HATRED! BUT THE EXCITEMENT... THE ANTICIPATION... WAS TOO MUCH FOR A MAN IN ILL HEALTH!



IT WON'T BE LONG NOW-- OH, MY HEAD! I'M GETTING DIZZY... CAN HARDLY KEEP MY FEET! GOOD GRIEF... I... I...

LOOK! THAT MAN... SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH HIM!



STRICKEN WITH PANIC, BURKE BOLTS ACROSS A BUSY INTERSECTION, AND FINALLY INTO A BLIND ALLEY WHERE...

I-I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! THE DEMONS OF THE PAST ARE AFTER ME!

HELP!
HELP!



NO... PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE! HAVE MERCY...



BUT THE DEMONS OF EVIL ARE DEAF OF RICHARD BURKE'S PLEAS...



LATER...

WELL, WHAT A YA KNOW-- A STIFF AND HE'S ALL MINE! HM-M... THAT'S A FANCY COAT HE'S GOT ON! I COULD USE IT WITH THE COLD WEATHER COMIN'...



YI-!! DON'T TOUCH ME, YOU VULTURES! I DON'T WANT TO DIE! LEAVE ME ALONE...OH!

P-PAN-HANDLE PETERS-- OFF ON ANOTHER TEAR AGAIN! L-LOOK OUT!



POOR PAN HANDLE... WE WARNED HIM TO LAY OFF THE STUFF!

WELL-- WE'D BETTER CALL THE MORGUE! NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO FOR HIM NOW!



AND
THUS
AT CITY
MORGUE,
THE
FANTASTIC
ODYSSEY
OF THE
DEMON
COAT
REACHED
ITS
END---

BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, JOE! EVERY TIME THEY BRING IN A STIFF, WE GOTTA BURN THEIR CLOTHING! THAT'S A NICE COAT... I'D LIKE TO HAVE IT!

YOU KNOW THE CITY HEALTH ORDINANCE ABOUT THAT, ED! DO YOU WANTA CATCH SOMETHING BAD?





Can concentrated thought create something that would not exist otherwise? Occult teaching for centuries says that it can. At any rate, it's a fine basis for eerie fiction, and here is a powerful story that was written around 1933 by MEARLE PROUT.

■ For hours I had sat at my study table, trying in vain to feel and transmit to paper the sensations of a criminal in the death-house. You know how one may strive for hours—even days—to attain a desired effect, and then feel a sudden swift rhythm, and know he has found it? So it was with me.

Scarcely had I lifted my hands to the keys when my fellow-roomer who had long been bent quietly over a magazine, said, quietly enough, "That moon—I wonder if even it really exists!"

I turned sharply. "Just why did you say that?" I asked, after a moment's hesitation.

Shamefacedly Fred laughed, half apologetic. "I'm sorry I spoke aloud," he said. "I was only thinking of a bizarre theory." He moved to a bookshelf, and in a moment returned, dusting off a thick old leather-bound volume.

"I first encountered the idea here," he said, as he thumbed the yellowed pages. Listen:

"The Bible says, 'In the beginning God created earth.' From 18

what did He create it? Obviously, it was created by thought, imagery, force of will if you please. The Bible further says: "So God created man in His own image." Does this not mean that man has all the attributes of the Almighty, only upon a smaller scale? Surely, then, if the mind of God in its omnipotence could create the entire universe, the mind of man, being made in the image of God, and being his counterpart on earth, could in the same way, if infinitely smaller in degree, create things of its own will.

"For example, the old gods of the dawn-world. Who can say that they did not exist in reality, being created by man? And, once created, how can we tell whether they will not develop into something to harass and destroy, beyond all control of their creators? *If this be true, then the only way to destroy them is to cease to believe.* Thus it is that the old gods died when man's faith turned from them to Christianity."

He was silent a moment, watching me as I stood musing.

"Strange where such thoughts can

lead a person," I said. "How are we to know which things are real and which are fancies—racial fantasies, I mean, common in all of us. I think I see what you mean when you wondered if the moon were real."

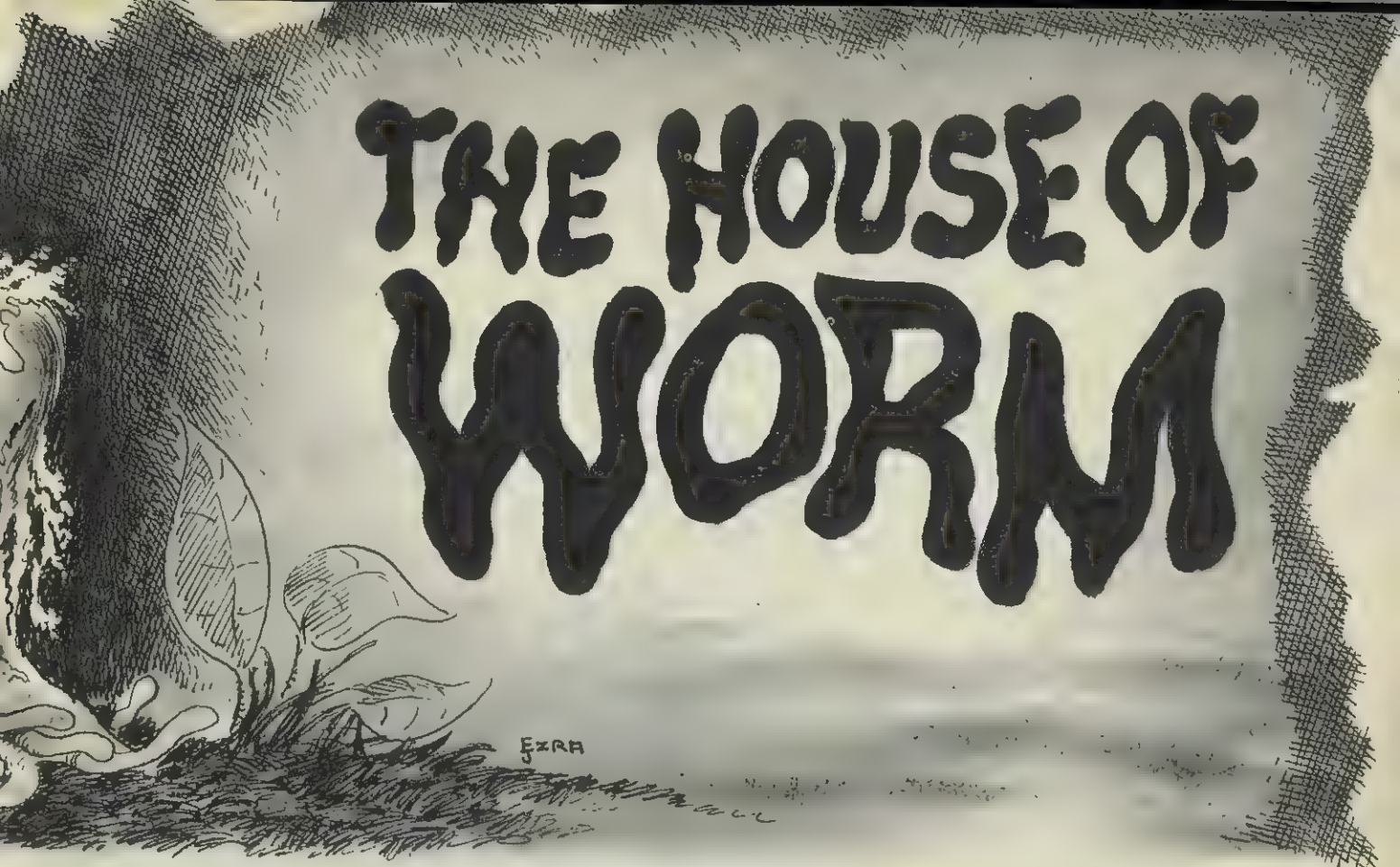
"But imagine," said my companion, "a group of people, a cult, all thinking the same thoughts, worshipping the same imaginery figure. What might not happen, if their fanaticism were such that they thought and felt deeply? A physical manifestation, alien to those of us who did not believe. . . ."

Next morning we both arose early—Fred to go back to his prosaic work as a bank clerk, I to place myself belatedly before my typewriter. After the diversion of the night before, I found that I was able to work out the bothersome scene with little difficulty, and that evening I mailed the finished and revised manuscript.

When my friend came in he spoke of the hunting-trip which he suggested. Romantic fellow that he was, his job at the bank was sheer drudgery, and any escape was rare good fortune. I, too, with my work out of the way and my mind clear, was doubly delighted at the prospect.

"I'd like to shoot some squirrels," I agreed. "And I know a good place. Can you leave tomorrow?"

"Yes, tomorrow; my vacation starts then," he replied. "But for a



THE HOUSE OF WORM

EXRA

long time I've been wanting to go back to my old stamping-grounds. It's not so very far—only a little over a hundred miles, and" — he looked at me in apology for differing with my plans — "in Sacramento Wood there are more squirrels than you ever saw."

And so it was agreed.

Sacramento Wood is an anomaly. Three or four miles wide and twice as long, it fills the whole of a peculiar valley, a rift, as it were, in the rugged topography of the higher Ozarks. No stream flows through it, there is nothing suggesting a normal valley; it is merely there, by sheer physical presence defying all questions. Grim, tree-flecked mountains hem it in on every side, as though seeking by their own ruggedness to compensate this spot of gentleness and serenity. And here lies the peculiarity: though the mountains around here are all inhabited—sparsely, of course, through necessity—the valley of the wood, with every indication of a wonderful fertility, has never felt the plow; and the tall, smooth forest of scented oak has never known the ax of the woodman.

It was midafternoon when we finally wound up the last mountain trail to stop at last in a small clearing. A tiny shanty with clapboard roof stood as ornament beside the road, and behind it a bent figure in

faded overalls was chopping the withered stalks of cotton.

"That would be old Zeke," confided my companion, his eyes shining with even this reminder of childhood. "Hallo!" he shouted, stepping to the ground.

The old mountaineer straightened, and wrinkled his face in recognition. He shook his head dumbly.

"Ain't no hunting now, boys. Everything is dead. Sacramento Wood is dead."

"Dead!" I cried. "Impossible! Why is it dead?"

I knew in a moment that I had spoken without tact. The mountaineer has no information to give one who expresses a desire for it—much less an outlander who shows incredulity.

The old man turned back to his work. "Ain't no hunting now," he repeated, and furiously attacked a stalk of cotton.

So obviously dismissed, we could not remain longer.

We continued. The road stretched ahead for some distance along the level top. And then, as we started the rough descent, Sacramento Wood burst full upon our view, clothed as I had never before seen it. Bright red, yellow, and brown mingled together in splashes of beauty as the massive trees put on their autumnal dress. Almost miniature it appeared

to us from our lookout, shimmering like a mountain lake in the dry heat of early fall.

Night comes early in the deep valley of Sacramento Wood. The sun was just resting on the high peak in the west as we entered the forest and struck camp. But long after comparative darkness had come over us, the mountain down which we had come was illuminated a soft gold.

We sat over our pipes in the gathering dusk. It was deeply peaceful, there in the darkening wood, and yet Fred and I were unnaturally silent, perhaps having the same thoughts. Why were the massive trees so early shorn of leaves? Why had the birds ceased to sing?

A cheery fire soon dispelled our fears. Fred, however, somewhat overcame my feeling of security.

"Art, whatever the cause, we must admit that Sacramento Wood is dead. Why, man, those trees are not getting ready for dormance; they are dead. Why haven't we heard birds? Bluejays used to keep this place in a continual uproar. And where did I get the feeling I had as we entered here? I felt as if I was entering a graveyard. I know, I tell you!"

For all his nervousness, Fred was the first to go to sleep that night. We heaped the fire high before turning in, and I lay for a long while and watched the leaping flames. But I too

must have dropped off, for when I was awakened by a low moan the fire was dead. The wood was quiet; not a whisper or rustle of leaves disturbed the heavy stillness of the night. And then I sensed the odor. . . . Once sensed, it grew and grew until the air seemed heavy, even massive with the inertia of it, seemed to press itself into the ground through sheer weight. It eddied and swirled in sickening waves of smell. It was the odor of death and putridity.

I heard another moan.

"Fred," I called, my voice catching in my throat.

The only answer was a deeper moan.

I grasped his arm, and—my fingers sank in the boated flesh as into a rotting corpse! The skin burst like an over-ripe berry, and slime flowed over my hand and dripped from my fingers.

Overcome with horror, I struck a light; and under the tiny flare I saw for a moment—his face! Purple, bloated, the crawling flesh nearly covered his staring eyes; white worms swarmed his puffed body, exuded squirming from his nostrils, and fell upon his livid lips. The foul stench grew stronger; so thick was it that my tortured lungs cried out for relief. Then, with a shriek of terror, I cast the lighted match from me, and threw myself into the bed, and buried my face in the pillow.

How long I lay there, sick, trembling, overcome with nausea, I do not know. But I slowly became aware of a rushing sound in the tree-tops. Great limbs creaked and groaned; the trunks themselves seemed to



crack in agony. I looked up, and saw a ruddy light reflected about us. And like a crash of thunder came the thought into my brain:

"Fire is clean; fire is life. Without fire there would be no cleanness in the world."

And at this command I rose, and grasped everything within reach, and cast it upon the dying flames. Was I mistaken, or was the odor of death really less? I hauled wood, and heaped the fire high. Fortunate indeed that the match I had thrown had fallen in the already sere leaves!

When next I thought of my companion the roaring blaze was leaping fifteen feet in the air. Slowly I turned, expecting to see a corpse weltering in a miasma of filth, and saw—a man calmly sleeping!

I awoke him, and waited.

He half looked at me, and then, gazing at the fire, gave a cry of ecstasy. A light of bliss shone for a moment in his eyes, as in a young child first staring at the mystery of cleansing flame; and then, as realization came, this too faded into a look of terror and loathing.

"The worms!" he cried. "The maggots! The odor came, and with it the worms. And I awoke. Just as the fire died. . . . I couldn't cry out. The worms came—I don't know whence; from nowhere, perhaps. They came, and they crawled, and they ate. And the smell came with them! It just appeared, as did the worms, from out of thin air! It just—became. Then—death—I died, I tell you—I rotted—I rotted, and the worms—the maggots—they ate. . . . I am *dead*, I say! *Dead!* Or should be!" He covered his face with his hands.

How we lived out the night without going mad, I do not know. All through the long hours we kept the fire burning high; and all through the night the lofty trees moaned back their mortal agony. The rotting death did not return; in some strange way the fire kept us clean of it, and fought it back.

Dawn came at last, sweeping westward before it the web of darkness. From across the forest, and around us on all sides, the giant trees rustled in pain, suggesting the gnashing of millions of anguished teeth. And over the ridge to eastward came the smiling sun.

Never was a day so long in coming, and never so welcome its arrival. In a half-hour our belongings were gathered, and we quickly drove to the open road.

"Fred, you remember our conversation of a couple of evenings ago?" I asked my companion, after some time



of silence. "I'm wondering whether that couldn't apply here."

"Meaning that we were the victims of—hallucination? Then how do you account for this?" He raised his sleeve above his elbow, showing his arm. How well did I remember it! For there, under curling skin and red as a brand, was the print of my hand!

The wound on Fred's arm healed quickly; in a week not even a scar remained. But we were changed. We had seen the cross-current, and we knew. By daylight a swift recollection often brought nausea; and the nights, even with the lights left burning, were rife with horror. Our very lives seemed bound into the events of one night.

Yet, even so, I was not prepared for the shock I felt when, one night nearly a month later, Fred burst into the room, his face livid.

"Read this," he said in a husky whisper, and extended a crumpled newspaper to my hand. I reached for it, read where he had pointed.

MOUNTAINEER DIES

Ezekiel Whipple, lone mountaineer, aged 64, was found dead in his cabin yesterday by neighbors.

The post-mortem revealed a terrible state of putrefaction; medical men aver that death could not have occurred less than two weeks ago.

The examination by the coroner revealed no sign of foul play, yet local forces for law and order are working upon what may yet be a valuable clue. Jesse Layton, a near neighbor and close friend of the aged bachelor, states that he visited and held conversation with him the day preceding; and it is upon this statement that anticipation of possible arrest is based.

"God!" I cried. "Does it mean . . ."

"Yes! It's spreading—whatever it is. It's reaching out, crawling over the mountains. God knows to where it may finally extend."

"No. It is not a disease. It is alive. It's alive, Art! I tell you, I felt it; I heard it. I think it tried to talk to me."

For us there was no sleep that night. Every moment of our half-forgotten experience was relived a thousand times, every horror amplified by the darkness and our fears. We wanted to flee to some far country, to leave far behind us the terror we had felt. We wanted to stay and fight to destroy the destroyer.

And so, torn by these conflicting desires, we did what was to be expected—precisely nothing.

Eventually, of course, we told our story. But lowered glances and obvious embarrassment told us too well how little we were believed. Indeed, who could expect normal people of the year 1933, with normal experiences, to believe the obviously impossible? And so, to save ourselves, we talked no more, but watched in dread from the sidelines the slow, implacable growth.

It was midwinter before the first town fell in the way of the expanding circle. Only a mountain village of half a hundred inhabitants; but the death came upon them one cold winter night—late at night, for there were no escapes—and smothered all in their beds. And when the next day visitors found and reported them, there was described the same terrible advanced state of putrefaction that had been present in all the other cases.

Then the world, apathetic always, began to believe. But, even so, they sought the easiest, the most natural, explanation, and refused to recognize the possibilities we half outlined to them. Some new plague, they said, is threatening us, is ravaging our hill



country. We will move away. . . .

Doctors swarmed the infested district, in fear of personal safety examined the swollen corpses, and found—the bacteria of decay, and—the worms. They warned the natives to leave the surrounding country; and then, to avoid panic, they added encouragement.

"We have an inkling of the truth," they said, after the best manner of the detective agency. "It is hoped that we may soon isolate the deadly bacterium, and produce an immunizing serum."

And the world believed. . . .

Spring came, and the encroaching menace had expanded to a circle ten miles in radius, with a point in the wood as a center. Slow enough, to be sure, but seemingly irresistible. . . . The quiet, lethal march of the disease, the *death*, as it was called, still remained a mystery—and a fear. And as week after week fled by with no good tidings from the physicians and men of science there assembled, my doubts grew stronger. Why, I asked, if it were a plague, did it never strike its victims during the day? What disease could strike down all life alike, whether animal or vegetable?

"Fred," I said one day, "they can't stand fire—if you are right. We'll burn the wood. We'll take kerosene. We'll burn the wood, and if you are right, the thing will die."

His face brightened. "Yes," he said, "we'll burn the wood, and—the thing will die. Fire saved me: I know it; you know it. Fire could never cure a disease; it could never make normal trees whisper and

groan, and crack in agony. We'll burn the wood, and the thing will die."

So we said, and so we believed. And we set to work.

Four barrels of kerosene we took, and tapers, and torches. And on a clear, cold day in early March we set out in the truck. The wind snapped bitterly out of the north; our hands grew blue with chill in the open cab. But it was a clean cold. Before its pure sharpness, it was almost impossible to believe that we were heading toward filth and a barren country of death. And, still low in the east, the sun sent its bright yellow shafts over the already budding trees.

It was still early in the morning when we arrived at the edge of the slowly enlarging circle of death. Here the last victim, only a day or so earlier, had met his end. Yet, even without this last to tell us of its nearness, we could have judged by the absence of all life. The tiny buds we had noted earlier were absent; the trees remained dry and cold as in the dead of winter.

Why did not the people of the region heed the warnings and move? True, most of them had done so. But a few old mountaineers remained—and died one by one.

We drove on, up the rocky, precipitous trail, leaving the bustle and safety of the normal world behind us. A faint stench assailed my nostrils—the odor of death. It grew and it grew. Fred was pale; and, for that matter, so was I. Pale—and weak.

"We'll light a torch," I said. "Perhaps this odor will die."

We lit a torch in the brightness of

the day, then drove on.

Once we passed a pig-sty: white bones lay under the sun; the flesh was decayed and eaten away entirely.

The sun was still bright, but weak, in some strange way. It shone doubtfully, vacillating, as if there were a partial eclipse.

But the valley was near. We passed the last mountain, passed the falling cabin of the mountaineer who was the first to die. We started the descent.

Sacramento Wood lay below us, not fresh and green as I had seen it first, years before, nor yet flashing with color as on our last trip the autumn before. It was cold, and obscured. A black cloud lay over it, a blanket of darkness, a rolling mist like that which is said to obscure the River Styx. It covered the region of death like a heavy shroud, and hid it from our probing eyes. Could I have been mistaken, or did I hear a broad whisper rising from the unhallowed wood of the holy name? Or did I feel something I could not hear?

But in one respect I could not be wrong. It was growing dark. The farther we moved down the rocky trail, the deeper we descended into this stronghold of death, the paler became the sun, the more obscured our passage.

"Fred," I said in a low voice, "they are hiding the sun. They are destroying the light. The wood will be dark."

"Yes," he answered. "The light hurts them. I could feel their pain and agony that morning as the sun rose; they can not kill in the day. But now they are stronger, and are hid-

ing the sun itself. The light hurts them, and they are destroying it."

We lit another torch and drove on.

When we reached the wood, the darkness had deepened, the almost palpable murk had thickened until the day had become as a moonlight night. But it was not a silver night. The sun was red; red as blood, shining on the accursed forest. Great red rings surrounded it, like the red rings of sleeplessness surrounding a diseased eye. No, the sun itself was not clean; it was weak, diseased, powerless as ourselves before the new terror. Its real glow mingled with the crimson of the torches, and lit up the scene around us with the color of blood.

We drove as far as solid ground would permit our passage—barely to the edge of the forest, where the wiry, scraggly growth of cedar and blackjack gave place to the heavy growth of taller, straighter oak. Then we abandoned our conveyance and stepped upon the rotting earth. And at this, more strongly it seemed than before, the stench of rottenness came over us. We were thankful that all animal matter had decayed entirely away; there only remained the acrid, penetrating odor of decaying plants; disagreeable, and powerfully suggestive to our already sharpened nerves, but endurable. . . . And it was warm, there in the death-ridden floor of the valley. In spite of the season of the year and the absence of the sun's warmth, it was not cold. The heat of decay, of fermentation, overcame the biting winds which occasionally swept down from the surrounding hills.

The trees were dead. Not only dead; they were rotten. Great limbs had crashed to the ground, and littered the soggy floor. All smaller branches were gone, but the trees themselves remained upright, their naked limbs stretched like supplicating arms to the heavens as these martyrs of the wood stood waiting. Yet in even these massive trunks the worms crawled—and ate. It was a forest of death, a nightmare, fungous forest that cried out to the invaders, that sobbed in agony at the bright torches, and rocked to and fro in all its unholy rottenness.

Protected by our torches, we were immune to the forces of death that were rampant in the dark reaches of the wood, beyond our flaring light. But while they could not prey upon our bodies, they called, they drew upon our minds. Pictures of horror, of putridity and nightmare thronged our brains. I saw again my comrade as he had lain in his bed, over a half-year before; I thought of the mountain village, and of the three-score victims who had died there in one night.

We did not dare, we knew, to dwell on these things; we would go insane. We hastened to collect a pile of dead limbs. We grasped the dank, rotten things—limbs and branches which broke on lifting, or crumbled to dust between our fingers. At last, however, our heap was piled high with the driest, the firmest of them, and over all we poured a full barrel of kerosene. And as we lit the vast pile, and watched the flames roar high and higher, a sigh of pain, sorrow and impotent rage swept the field of death.

"The fire hurts them," I said. "While there is fire they can not harm us; the forest will burn, and they will all die."

"But will the forest burn? They have dimmed the sun, they have even dimmed our torches. See! They should be brighter! Would the forest burn of itself, even if they let it alone? It is damp and rotten, and will not burn. See, our fire is burning out! We have failed."

Yes we had failed. We were forced to admit it when, after two more trials, we were at last satisfied beyond any doubt that the forest could not be destroyed by fire. Our hearts had been strong with courage, but now fear haunted us, cold perspiration flooded our sick, trembling bodies as we sent the clattering truck hurtling up the rocky trail to safety. Our torches flared in the wind, and left a black trail of smoke behind us as we fled.



But, we promised ourselves, we would come again. We would bring many men, and dynamite. We would find where this thing had its capital, and would destroy it.

And we tried. But again we failed.

There were no more deaths. Even the most obstinate moved from the stricken country when spring came and revealed the actual presence of the deadly circle. A condition of terror prevailed over the populations in adjoining districts. The newspapers carried in their columns nothing but blasted hopes. They contained long descriptions of each new advance; long, technical theories of the scientists assembled at the front of battle; but no hope.

We pointed this out to the terror-ridden people, told them that in our idea lay the only chance of victory. We outlined to them our plan, pleaded for their assistance. But, "No," they said. "The plague is spreading. It began in the wood, but it is out of the wood now. How would it help to burn the wood now? The world is doomed. Come with us, and live while you can. We must all die."

"Fred," I told him, we have not yet failed. We will equip a large truck. No! We will take a tractor. We will do as we said. Take more kerosene, and dynamite; we will destroy it yet!"

It was our last chance; we knew that. If we failed now, the world was indeed doomed. And we knew that every day the death grew stronger, and we worked fast to meet it.

The materials we needed we hauled overland in the truck; more torches, dynamite, eight barrels of kerosene. We even took two guns. And then we loaded all these in an improvised trailer behind the caterpillar, and started out.

The wood was dark now, although





it was not yet midday when we entered. Black as a well at midnight was the forest; our torches sent their flickering red a scant twenty feet through the obstinate murk. And through the shivering darkness there reached our ears a vast murmur, as of a million hives of bees.

How we chose a path I do not know; I tried to steer toward the loudest part of the roar, hoping that by so doing we would find the source itself of the scourge. And our going was not difficult. The tractor laid down its endless track, crushing to paste beneath it the dank, rotting wood which littered the forest floor. And from behind, over the smooth track crushed through the forest, lumbered the heavy trailer.

The gaunt, scarred trees, shorn of every limb, stood around us like weird sentinels pointing the way. And, if possible, the scene grew more desolate the farther we proceeded; the creaking trunks standing pole-like seemed more and more rotten; the odor of death around us, not the sickening odor of decay, but the less noxious yet more penetrating smell of rotteness complete, grew even more piercing. And it called and drew. From out of the darkness it crept into our brains, moved them, changed them to do its will. We did not know. We only knew that the odor around us no longer nauseated; it became the sweetest of perfumes to our nostrils. We only knew that the fungus-like trees pleased our eyes, seemed to fill and satisfy some long-hidden esthetic need. In my mind there grew a picture of a perfect world: damp, decayed vegetation and succulent flesh—rotting flesh—upon which to feed. Over all the earth, it seemed, this picture extended; and I shouted aloud in ecstasy.

At the half-involuntary shout, something flashed upon me, and I knew that these thoughts were not my own, but were foisted upon me

from without. With a shriek, I reached to the torch above and bathed my arms in the living flame; I grasped the taper from its setting and brandished it in my comrade's face. The cleansing pain raced through my veins and nerves; the picture faded, the longing passed away; I was myself again.

Then, suddenly, above the roar from without and the steady beat of our engine, we heard a human chant. I idled the motor, jerked out the gears. Clear on our ears its mote now, a chant in a familiar, yet strangely altered tongue. Life! In this region of death? It was impossible! The chant ceased, and the hum among the poles of trees doubled in intensity. Someone, or something, rose to declaim. I strained my ears to hear, but it was unnecessary; clear and loud through the noisome darkness rose its high semi-chant:

"Mighty is our lord, the Worm. Mightier than all the kings of heaven and of earth is the Worm. The gods create; man plans and builds; but the Worm effaces their handiwork."

"Mighty are the planners and the builders; great their works and their possessions. But at last they must fall heir to a narrow plot of earth; and even that, forsooth, the Worm will take away."

"O Master! On bended knee we give thee all these things! We give unto thee the life of the earth to be thy morsel of food! We give unto thee the earth itself to be thy residence!"

"Mighty, oh mighty above all the kings of heaven and of earth is our lord and master, the Worm, to whom Time is naught!"

Sick with horror and repulsion, Fred and I exchanged glances. There was life! God knew what sort, but life, and human! I raced the motor, snapped the machine into gear and pushed on.

And one hundred feet farther I stopped, for we were upon the wor-

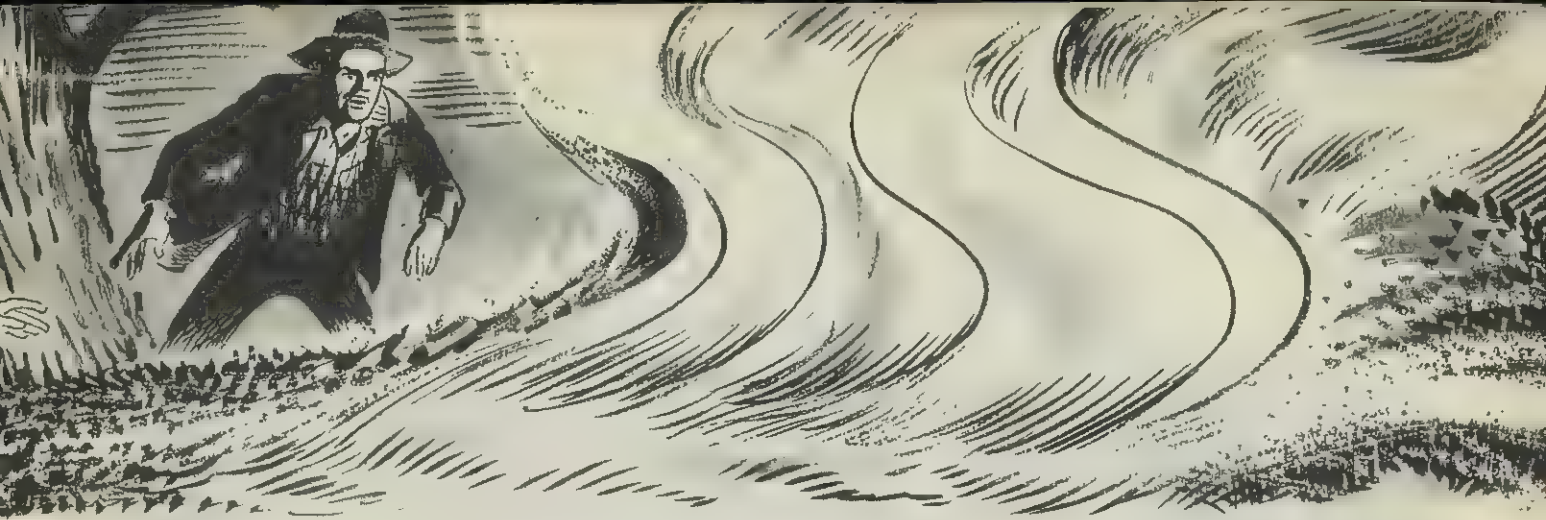
shippers! Half a hundred of them there were, crouching and kneeling, yes, even wallowing in the putrefaction and filth around them. And the sounds, the cries to which they gave vent as our flaming torches smote full upon their sightless, staring eyes! Only a madman could recall and place upon the printed page the litanies of hate and terror which they flung into our faces. A few moments only did they stand defiantly in our way; the pain of the unaccustomed light was too much for their sensitive eyes. With shrill shouts of terror they turned and fled. And we looked about us, upon the weltering filth with which we were surrounded, and—smiled!

For we saw their idol! Not an idol of wood, or stone, or of any clean, normal thing. It was a heaped-up grave! Massive, twenty feet long and half as high, it was covered with rotting bones and limbs of trees. The earth, piled there in the gruesome mound, shivered and heaved as from some foul life within. Then, half buried in filth, we saw the headstone—itsself a rotting board, leaning askew in its shallow setting. And on it was carved only the line: *The House of the Worm.*

The house of the worm! A heaped-up grave! And the cult of blackness and death had sought to make of the world one foul grave, and to cover even that with a shroud of darkness!

With a shriek of rage I stamped my foot upon the earth piled there. The crust was thin, so thin that it broke through, and nearly precipitated me headlong into the pit itself; only a violent wrench backward prevented me from falling into the pitching mass of—worms! White, wriggling, the things squirmed there under our blood-red, flaring light, writhed with agony in the exquisite torture brought to them by the presence of cleansing flame. The house of worm, indeed.

Sick with loathing, we worked mad-



ly. The roar of the alien forest had risen to a howl—an eldritch gibber which sang in our ears and drew at our brains as we toiled. We lit more torches, bathed our hands in the flame, and then, in defiance of the malign will, we demolished the quivering heap of earth which had mocked the form of a grave. We planted dynamite. We carried barrel after barrel of fuel, and poured it upon the squirming things, which were already spreading out, rolling like an ocean of filth at our very feet. And then, forgetting the machine which was to take us to safety, I hurled the box of black powder upon them, watched it sink through the mass until out of sight, then applied the torch. And fled.

"Art! The tractor—the rest of the oil we need to light our way out. . . ."

I laughed insanely, and ran on.

A hundred yards away, we stopped and watched the spectacle. The flames, leaping fifty feet in air, illuminated the forest around us, us. Unseen voices that howled madly pushed back the thick unnatural and mouthed hysterical gibberish tore at our very souls in their wild pleading; so tangible were they that we felt them pull at our bodies, sway them back and forth with the unholy dance of the rocking trees. From the pit of foulness where the flames danced brightest, a dense cloud of yellow smoke arose; a vast frying sound shrilled through the wood, was echoed back upon us by the blackness around. The tractor was enveloped in flames, the last barrel of oil spouting fire. And then. . . .

There came a deep, heavy-throated roar; the pulpy ground beneath our feet waved and shook; the roaring flames, impelled by an irresistible force beneath them, rose simultaneously into air, curved out in long sweeping parabolas of lurid flame, and scattered over the moaning forest floor.

The house of the worm was destroyed; and simultaneously with its destruction the howling voices around us died into a heavy-throated whisper of silence. The black mist of darkness above and about shook for a moment like a sable silk, caught gropingly at us, then rolled back over the ruined trees and revealed—the sun!

The sun, bright in all his noonday glory, burst out full above us, warming our hearts with a golden glow.

"See, Art!" my companion whispered, "the forest is burning; there is nothing now to stop it, and everything will be destroyed."

It was true. From a thousand tiny places flames were rising and spreading, sending queer little creepers of flame to explore for further progress, was taking root.

We turned, we walked swiftly into the breath of the warm south wind which swept down upon us; we left the growing fire at our backs and moved on. A half-hour later, after we had covered some two miles of fallen forest and odorous wasteland, we paused to look back. The fire had spread over the full width of the valley, and was roaring northward. I thought of the fifty refugees who had fled—also to the north.

"Poor devils!" I said. "But no doubt they are already dead; they could not endure the brightness of the sun for long."

And so ends our story of what is perhaps the greatest single menace that has ever threatened mankind. Science pondered, but could make nothing of it; in fact, it was long before we could evolve an explanation satisfactory even to ourselves.

We had searched vainly through every reference book on the occult, when an old magazine suddenly gave us the clue: it recalled to our minds a half-forgotten conversation which has been reproduced at the beginning of this narrative.

In some strange way, this Cult of

the Worm must have organized for the worship of death, and established their headquarters there in the valley. They built the huge grave as a shrine, and by the overconcentration upon worship of their fanatical minds, caused a physical manifestation to appear within it as the real result of their thought. And what suggestion of death could be more forceful than its eternal accompaniment—the worms of death and the bacteria of decay? Perhaps their task was lessened by the fact that death is always a reality, and does not need so great a concentration of will to produce.

At any rate, from that beginning, that center, they radiated thought-waves strong enough to bring their influence over the region where they were active; and as they grew stronger and stronger, and as their minds grew more and more powerful through the fierce mental concentration, they spread out, and even destroyed light itself. Perhaps they received many recruits, also, to strengthen their ranks, as we ourselves nearly succumbed; perhaps, too, the land once conquered was watched over by spirits invoked to their control, so that no further strength on their part was required to maintain it. That would explain the weird noises heard from all parts of the forest, which persisted even after the worshippers themselves had fled.

And as to their final destruction, I quote a line from the old volume where we first read of the theory: "*If this be true, the only way to destroy it is to cease to believe.*" When the mock grave, their great fetish, was destroyed, the central bonds which held their system together were broken. And when the worshippers themselves perished in the flames, all possibility of a recurrence of the terror died with them.

This is our explanation, and our belief.

SKULL SCAVENGER

IN THE MUSTY CRUMBLING RUINS OF AN OLD MONASTERY THEY FOUND HIM—A LITTLE MAN WITH A FACE LIKE A CORPSE, SEARCHING THROUGH PIECES OF ROTTING BONES! HIS STORY WAS FANTASTIC, HIS LIFE WAS INCREDIBLE, AND IN HIS QUAVERING VOICE WAS TERROR SUCH AS NO MAN HAD EVER KNOWN BEFORE! FOR THIS WAS THE MAN WHO LIVED TOO LONG...



IN FRANCE, NOT LONG AGO, AS TWO GENDARMES' PATROL...

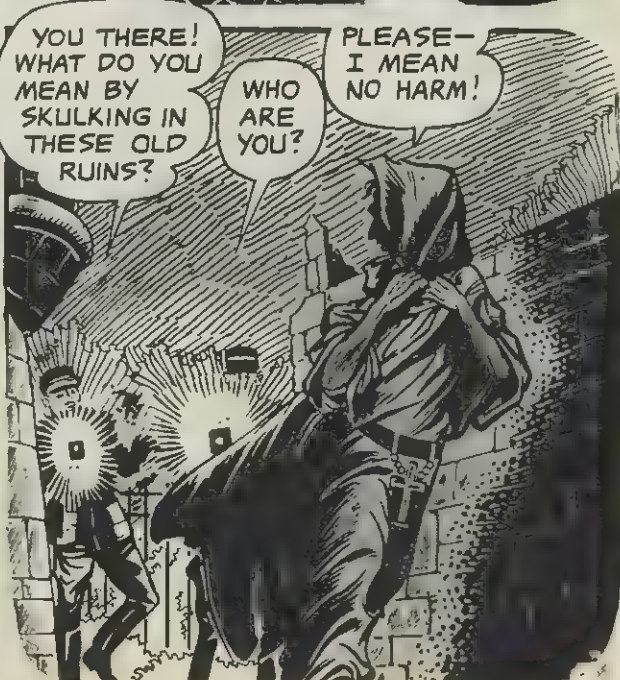
LOOKS LIKE THEY'LL HAVE THE OLD MONASTERY DOWN BEFORE LONG, PIERRE!

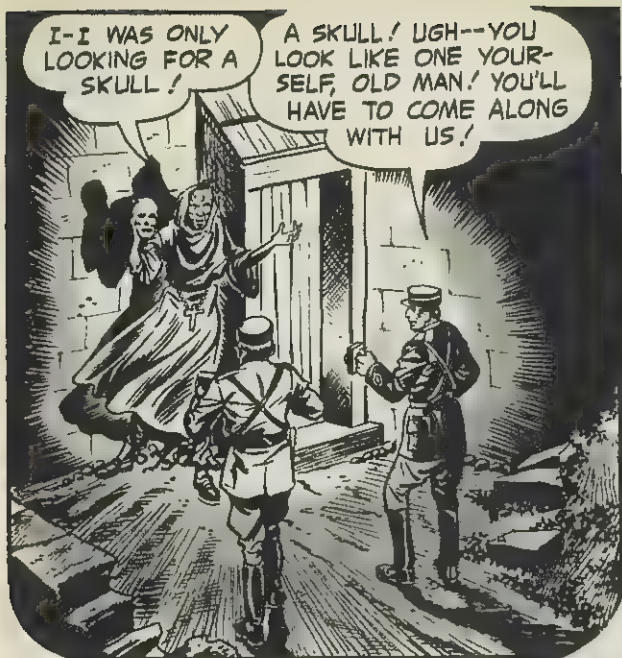
AND A GOOD THING, TOO! BUT WAIT—I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMEONE IN THERE!

YOU THERE! WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SKULKING IN THESE OLD RUINS?

WHO ARE YOU?

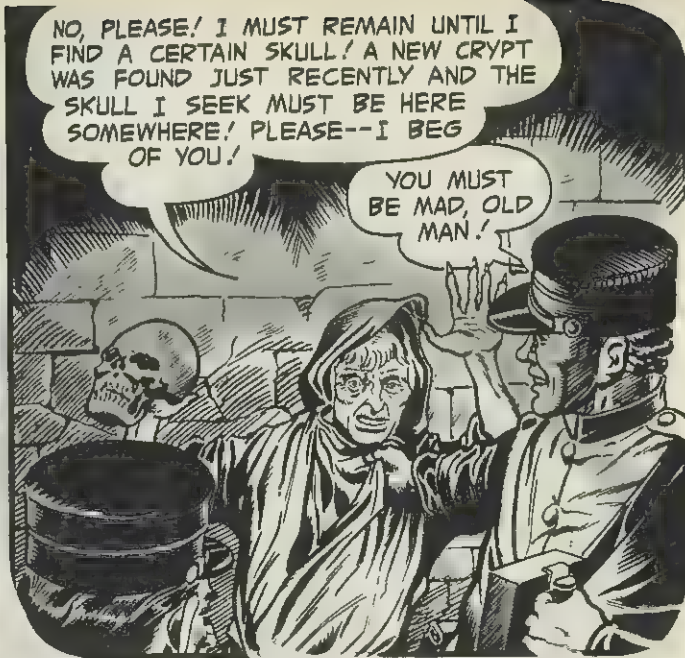
PLEASE—I MEAN NO HARM!





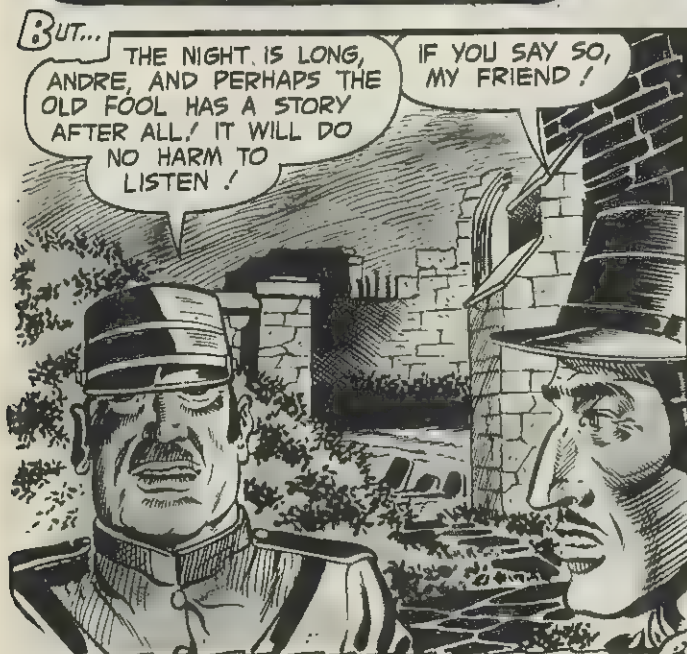
I-I WAS ONLY
LOOKING FOR A
SKULL!

A SKULL! UGH--YOU
LOOK LIKE ONE YOUR-
SELF, OLD MAN! YOU'LL
HAVE TO COME ALONG
WITH US!



NO, PLEASE! I MUST REMAIN UNTIL I
FIND A CERTAIN SKULL! A NEW CRYPT
WAS FOUND JUST RECENTLY AND THE
SKULL I SEEK MUST BE HERE
SOMEWHERE! PLEASE--I BEG
OF YOU!

YOU MUST
BE MAD, OLD
MAN!



BUT...

THE NIGHT IS LONG,
ANDRE, AND PERHAPS THE
OLD FOOL HAS A STORY
AFTER ALL! IT WILL DO
NO HARM TO
LISTEN!

IF YOU SAY SO,
MY FRIEND!



THANK YOU, SIR! YOU--CHUCKLE--WILL
NOT BE DISAPPOINTED! BUT NOW, BE
PREPARED FOR A SHOCK, BECAUSE
MY STORY BEGINS **NINE
HUNDRED YEARS AGO!**



**BELIEVE IT OR NOT--I LIVED THEN, IN THE
TENTH CENTURY! AND I LOVED A MAIDEN...**

JULES, DEAREST,
IF ONLY THIS
MOMENT WOULD
NEVER END!

YOU MUST NOT BE
SAD, MY SWEET! REMEMBER WHAT
I TOLD YOU!



OH, JULES, YOU MEAN
THAT SILLY EXPERIMENT
OF YOURS? THE
ELIXIR OF LIFE?

NOT AS SILLY
AS YOU THINK,
PERHAPS!

YOU KNOW THAT I'M A FINE ALCHEMIST, MY ANNE! I WORK EVERY NIGHT IN MY TOWER, AND EVERY NIGHT I GET CLOSER TO THE SECRET! I AM CONVINCED THAT THERE IS AN ELIXIR OF LIFE-- AND I WILL FIND IT!

BUT IT FRIGHTENS ME!



WE MORTALS ARE NOT MEANT TO KNOW SUCH THINGS! WE MUST DIE, AS ALL THINGS DO! PLEASE GIVE UP THIS DREADFUL ALCHEMY BEFORE SOME TERRIBLE FATE BEFALLS US!

DO NOT BE AFRAID! I KNOW WHAT I AM DOING!



AND THAT NIGHT, AS USUAL, I WORKED IN MY TOWER, SEARCHING FOR THE ELIXIR OF LIFE! MY BLACK CAT, LUCIFER, KEPT ME COMPANY...



HOURS LATER I PULLED MYSELF OFF THE FLOOR...

SO WE TRY AGAIN, OLD CAT! PERHAPS TONIGHT I WILL DISCOVER IT! NOW TO DRINK!



OH--THE PAIN! I'M ON FIRE INSIDE-- SOMETHING STRANGE IS HAPPENING THAT NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE!



I HASTENED TO TELL MY ANNE ABOUT MY SUCCESS...

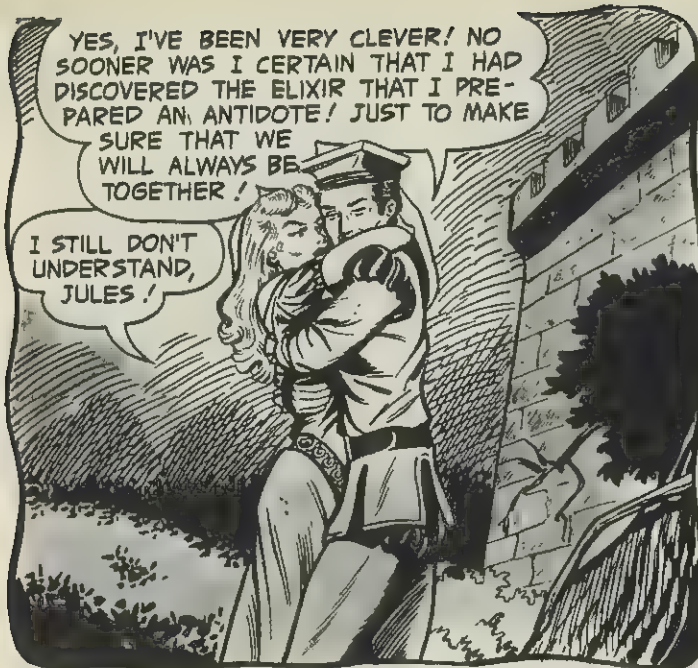
I'VE GOT IT AT LAST! I KNOW I HAVE! THIS MARVELOUS FEELING OF YOUTH, STRENGTH, AS THOUGH I CAN NEVER DIE!



I'VE DONE IT, DARLING! I'VE REALLY DISCOVERED THE ELIXIR OF LIFE! AND I'VE DONE MORE THAN THAT, TOO!

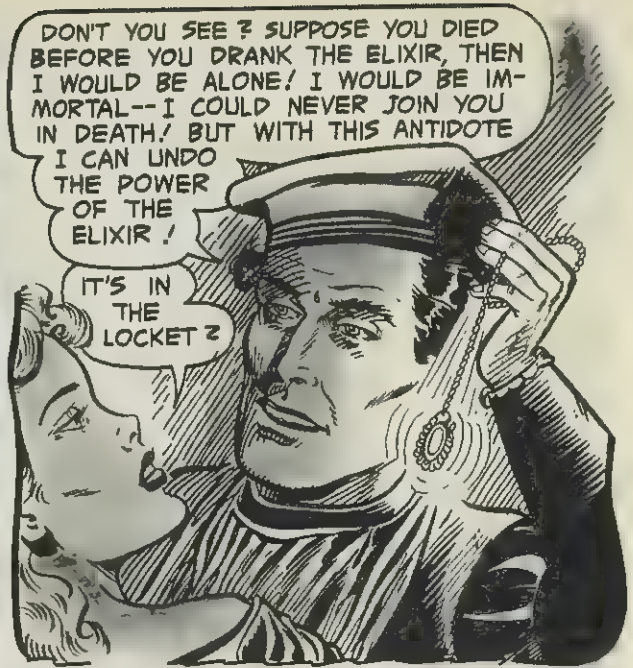
M-MORE, JULES! WHAT DO YOU MEAN?





YES, I'VE BEEN VERY CLEVER! NO SOONER WAS I CERTAIN THAT I HAD DISCOVERED THE ELIXIR THAT I PREPARED AN ANTIDOTE! JUST TO MAKE SURE THAT WE WILL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER!

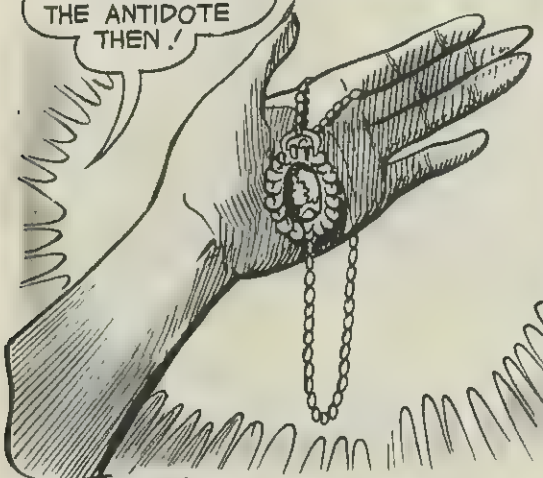
I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND, JULES!



DON'T YOU SEE? SUPPOSE YOU DIED BEFORE YOU DRANK THE ELIXIR, THEN I WOULD BE ALONE! I WOULD BE IMMORTAL--I COULD NEVER JOIN YOU IN DEATH! BUT WITH THIS ANTIDOTE I CAN UNDO THE POWER OF THE ELIXIR!

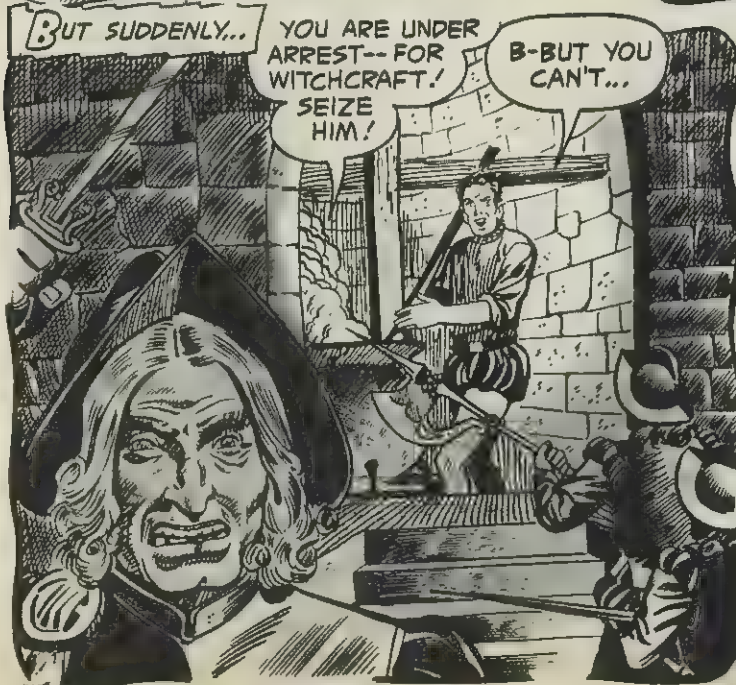
IT'S IN THE LOCKET?

YES! YOU MUST KEEP IT SAFE UNTIL I MIX MORE OF THE ELIXIR! THEN I WILL RETURN AND YOU WILL DRINK AND WE WILL BOTH BECOME IMMORTAL! WE WILL NOT NEED THE ANTIDOTE THEN!



HURRIED BACK TO MY TOWER...

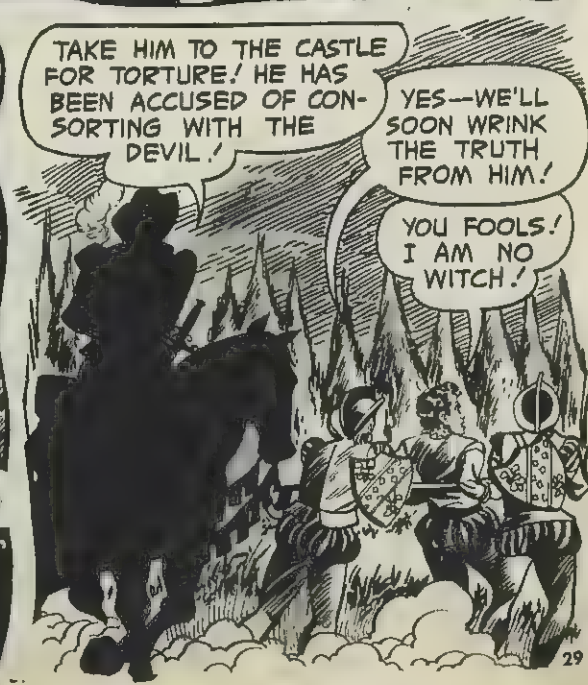
NOW FOR MORE OF THE ELIXIR! WHEN ANNE DRINKS WE NEED FEAR DEATH NO LONGER! WE WILL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER--ALWAYS YOUNG!



BUT SUDDENLY...

YOU ARE UNDER ARREST-- FOR WITCHCRAFT! SEIZE HIM!

B-BUT YOU CAN'T...



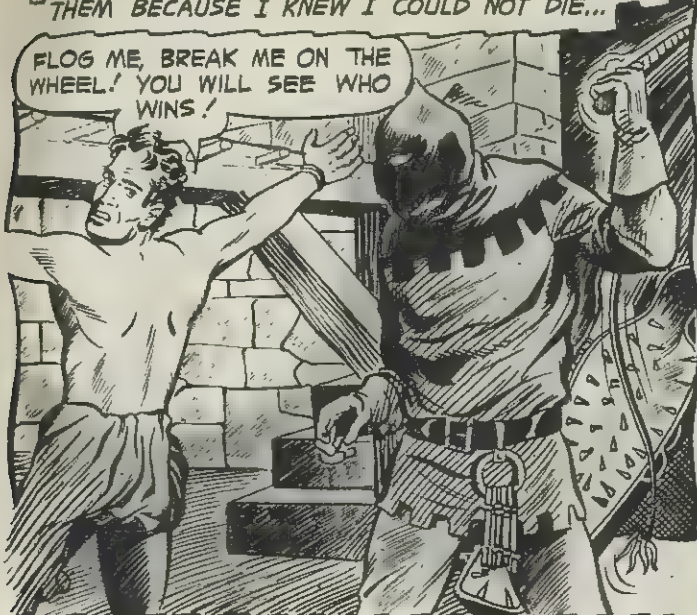
TAKE HIM TO THE CASTLE FOR TORTURE! HE HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF CON-SORTING WITH THE DEVIL!

YES--WE'LL SOON WRINK THE TRUTH FROM HIM!

YOU FOOLS! I AM NO WITCH!

I WAS HORRIBLY TORTURED, BUT I LAUGHED AT THEM BECAUSE I KNEW I COULD NOT DIE...

FLOG ME, BREAK ME ON THE WHEEL! YOU WILL SEE WHO WINS!



BUT IN THE END THEY BECAME DEATHLY AFRAID OF ME AND DROVE ME FROM THE CASTLE...

OUT, YOU FOUL FIEND! NEVER SHOW YOUR FACE AROUND HERE!

HAH! I HAVE BEATEN THEM!

HE IS TRULY A WITCH-- HE CANNOT DIE!



ARE YOU NOT TIRED, EXECUTIONER? DO YOU NOT SEE BY NOW HOW USELESS IT IS? WHY NOT CEASE TO MAKE FOOLS OF YOURSELVES AND LET ME GO!

QUIET, YOU ADVOCATE OF SATAN! WE WILL KILL YOU YET!



LATER I WENT TO OUR MEETING PLACE IN SEARCH OF ANNE...

SHE IS LATE, VERY LATE! CAN ANYTHING HAVE HAPPENED? SHE HAS STILL TO DRINK OF THE ELIXIR!



W-WHO ARE YOU, OLD CRONE? WHY DO YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT?

I BRING YOU NEWS-- BAD NEWS! YOUR MAIDEN, ANNE, WILL NEVER COME HERE TO MEET YOU AGAIN!

SHE WAS ACCUSED OF AIDING YOU-- IN WITCHCRAFT! I WATCHED AS THEY STRANGLED HER! SHE WILL BE BURIED IN SOME SECRET PLACE!

NO--OLD HAG! NO! YOU LIE! THIS MONSTROUS THING CANNOT BE TRUE!

AHH! BUT IT IS!



AND IT WAS TRUE! I HAD BEEN TOO CLEVER! I COULD NOT FIND ANNE'S BODY OR THE LOCKET WITH THE ANTIDOTE, AND TRY AS I WOULD I COULD NOT MIX MORE! I WAS DRIVEN OUT OF TOWN AFTER TOWN...

IF ONLY I COULD DIE-- BUT THAT IS THE ONE THING I CANNOT DO!

IF ONLY I COULD MIX THE ANTIDOTE AGAIN-- BUT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING RARE, SOME IMPURITY, IN MY FORMULA THE FIRST TIME! I HAVE TRIED AND TRIED--BUT THE ELIXIR WILL NOT LET ME DIE!



BUT AS TIME PASSED I MADE ANOTHER HORRIBLE DISCOVERY--THE ELIXIR KEPT ME FROM DYING, BUT NOT FROM GROWING OLD...

TIME AFTER TIME THEY TRIED TO KILL ME! IF ONLY THEY COULD HAVE SUCCEEDED--BUT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE...

THERE IS THE OLD WITCH!

KILL HIM! BURN HIM!

BURN THE WITCH AT THE STAKE! LIGHT THE FAGGOTS!

PERHAPS THIS TIME THEY WILL SUCCEED AND GIVE ME PEACE AT LAST!

BURN HIM!



AHH--THE FIRE WILL NOT BURN!

IT IS TRUE--THE WOOD REFUSES THE FLAME!

STILL I MUST LIVE!

THIS IS WITCHCRAFT, INDEED!

SO I MUST GO ON--AND ON! I AM NOW 200 YEARS OLD AND STILL WITH NO HOPE OF DEATH! IF ONLY, SOMEHOW, I COULD FIND THE BODY OF ANNE, COULD RETRIEVE THE ANTIDOTE IN THE LOCKET I GAVE HER!



THAT IS THE FIRST PART OF MY STORY, SIR! BUT IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY AS I PASSED MY 900TH BIRTHDAY, THAT I FOUND HOPE AT LAST!

YOU ARE INSANE, SURE ENOUGH!

BUT GO ON, OLD MAN!

I HAD WANDERED AROUND THE WORLD SCORES OF TIMES--AND NOW I FOUND MYSELF IN LONDON ONCE MORE! ONE DAY I HEARD AN EXTRA BEING CRIED...

EXTRA! ALL ABOUT THE OLD MONASTERY! FIND TREASURE WORTH MILLIONS! EXTRA!

HERE, LAD!

EXTRA

IT IS! THE VERY MONASTERY WHERE ANNE AND I USED TO MEET! I MUST GO THERE AT ONCE!

IN TEARING DOWN THE MONASTERY THEY HAD FOUND BURIED TREASURE, BUT I CARED LITTLE FOR THAT! WHAT MATTERED TO ME WAS THAT THEY HAD ALSO FOUND A SECRET CRYPT WHERE A WOMAN ACCUSED OF WITCHCRAFT HAD BEEN BURIED! IT COULD ONLY BE ANNE...

IF ONLY THEY HAVEN'T DISTURBED THE BONES TOO MUCH!

TONIGHT I CAME HERE TO SEARCH FOR THAT SECRET CRYPT! MY HOPES WERE HIGH THAT AT LAST I WOULD FIND THE BONES OF ANNE--AND THE LOCKET WITH THE ANTIDOTE! YOU KNOW THE REST!

I BEG OF YOU, IN THE MERCY OF HEAVEN, LET ME CONTINUE MY SEARCH! I MUST FIND THAT LOCKET--I MUST!

ALL RIGHT, OLD ONE!



THE CRYPT IS DOWN HERE IN THIS OLD DUNGEON! BUT YOU'LL BE LUCKY IF YOU CAN FIND THAT LOCKET!

YOU BEGIN TO BELIEVE THE OLD FOOL, THEN?

THANK YOU! I MUST FIND IT!



THIS IS THE CRYPT, NO DOUBT OF IT! WHERE THEY BURIED MY POOR ANNE 900 YEARS AGO! THEY THOUGHT HER GUILTY OF WITCH-CRAFT AND BURIED HER SECRETLY IN UNHALLOWED GROUND!



THE LOCKET! I HAVE FOUND IT AT LAST! THANK GOODNESS! AND THIS MUST BE ANNE'S SKULL-- MY POOR, DEAR LOVE, WAITING FOR ME ALL THESE WEARY CENTURIES! BUT NOW I CAN JOIN HER!



CAREFUL, OLD MAN!

THE ANTIDOTE! AT LAST I CAN DIE!



LOOK! H-HE IS G-GONE! JUST A SKELETON NOW! HIS STORY WAS TRUE, AFTER ALL!

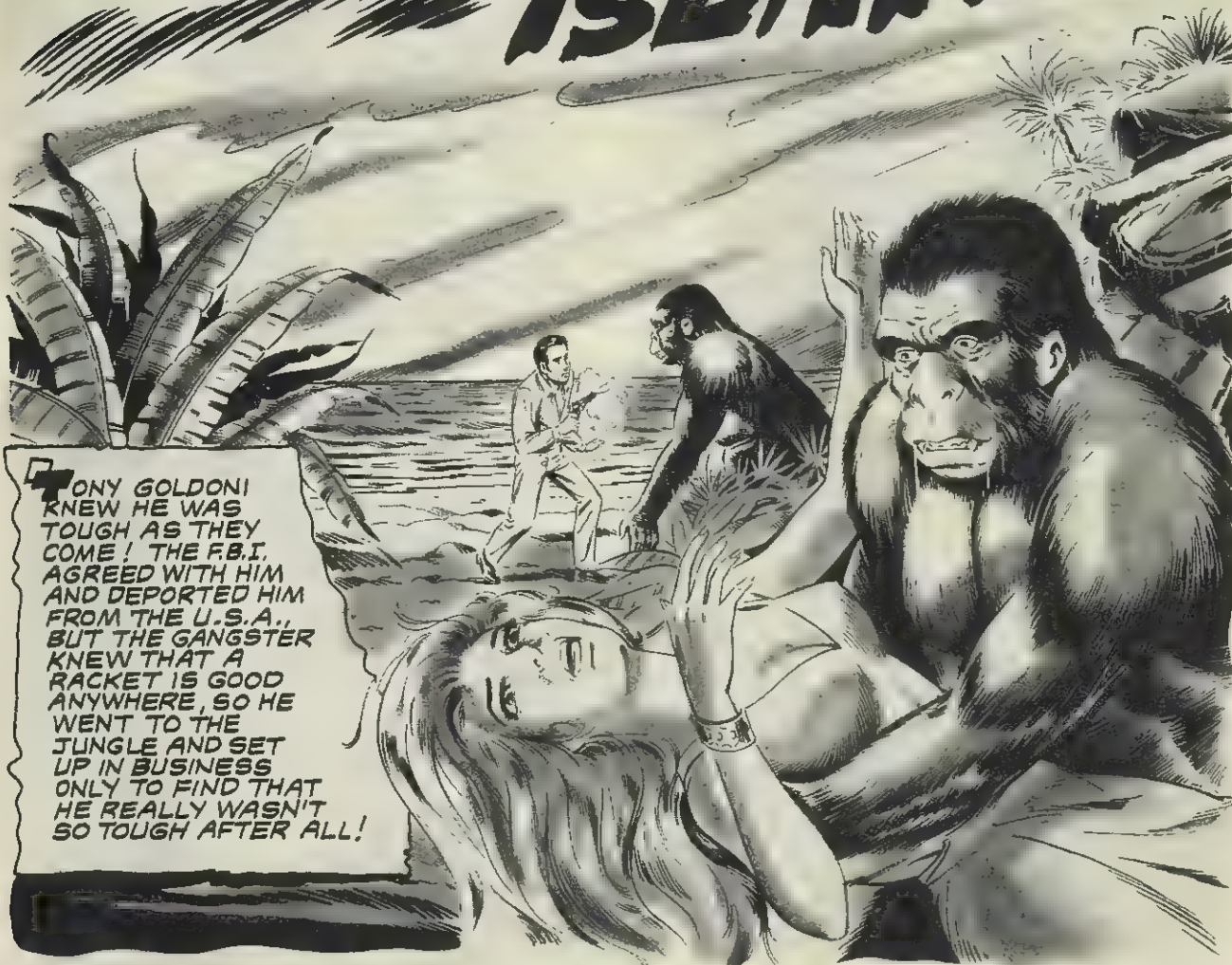
YES, INCREDIBLE AS IT WAS!



SEE, THEY ARE TOGETHER IN DEATH AT LAST! TWO MOULDERING PILES OF BONES!

COME, MY FRIEND, AND LET US LEAVE THEM IN PEACE!

HORROR ISLAND



TONY GOLDONI KNEW HE WAS TOUGH AS THEY COME! THE F.B.I. AGREED WITH HIM AND DEPORTED HIM FROM THE U.S.A., BUT THE GANGSTER KNEW THAT A RACKET IS GOOD ANYWHERE, SO HE WENT TO THE JUNGLE AND SET UP IN BUSINESS ONLY TO FIND THAT HE REALLY WASN'T SO TOUGH AFTER ALL!

FEDERAL MEN CLOSE IN ON THE HIDEOUT OF TONY GOLDONI...

CAREFUL, MEN, THIS GUY IS A KILLER!

TONY HAS BEEN ONE JUMP AHEAD OF US FOR A LONG TIME, BUT THIS IS IT!

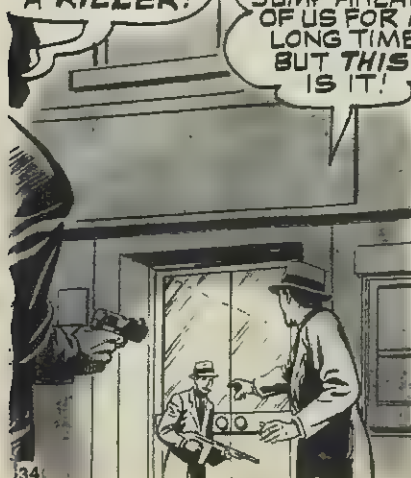
TAKE IT EASY, CHUM, AND YOU WON'T GET HURT! WE WANT TONY GOLDONI!

OKAY, BOYS! I'LL GO QUIETLY, ONLY DON'T HURT ME!

NOW YOU'RE BEING SMART, TONY! YOU, TOO, MILLIE... THE DEPARTMENT WANTS TO TALK TO BOTH OF YOU!

LET'S GO IN!

WHY DON'T YOU BLAST THEM!



AND SOON, IN A FEDERAL COURT...

...AND YOU ARE TO BE DEPORTED AND NEVER TO RETURN...

HAH... WHO CARES ABOUT BEING DEPORTED!

OKAY, SO DEPORT ME! THERE'LL COME A TIME WHEN I'LL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH ON YOU BUMS!

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE DUE FOR A VERY LONG VACATION IN THE OLD COUNTRY, TONY...

HOPE THE BOYS ARE READY TO PULL THE JOB...



SUDDENLY...

HURRY UP, BOSS!

RIGHT ON SCHEDULE! TRY TO DEPORT ME, WILL THEY? I'LL SHOW 'EM!

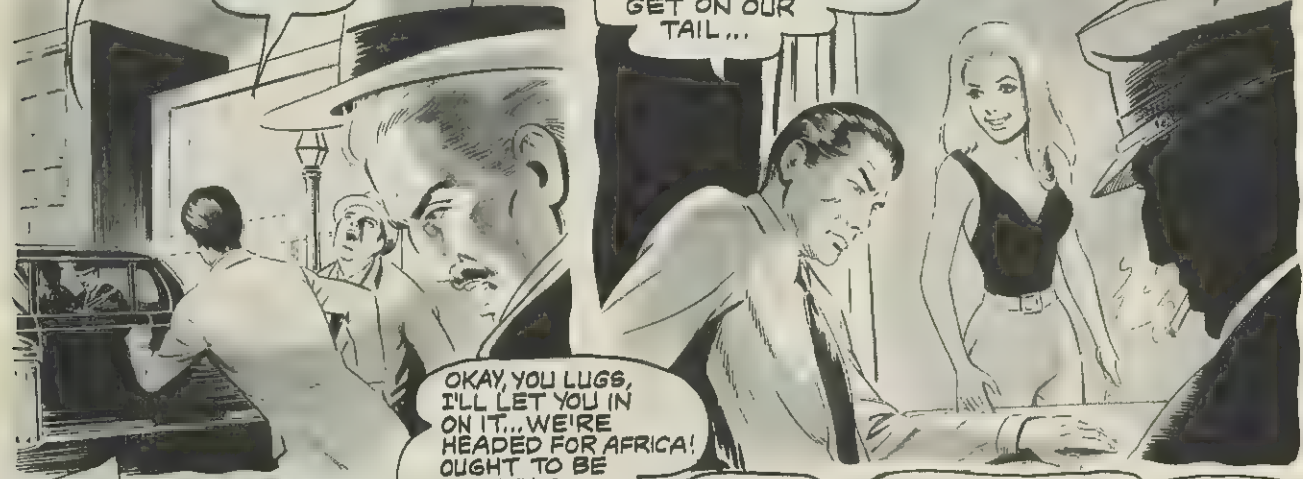
HE'S--HE'S GETTING AWAY! AGHH-H GOT ME!

And LATER, ON TONY'S YACHT...

LET'S GO! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUTSIDE THE TWELVE MILE LIMIT BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT BOATS GET ON OUR TAIL...

YOU'RE SOME OPERATOR, TONY!

WE'LL BE UNDER WAY IN A FEW MINUTES!



LATER...

WHERE WE HEADING? WE'VE BEEN AT SEA FOR A WEEK NOW AND YOU AIN'T TALKED NONE!

OKAY, YOU LUGS, I'LL LET YOU IN ON IT...WE'RE HEADED FOR AFRICA! OUGHT TO BE PLENTY OF RACKETS IN A COUNTRY LIKE THAT! I'LL BE A REAL KING!

AFRICA? WHERE ALL THOSE CANNIBALS ARE?

THERE SHE IS, OUR NEW HOME! WE'LL MAKE CHUMPS OUT OF THEM SAVAGES! TAKE 'EM FOR EVERYTHIN' THEY GOT!

HOPE IT WORKS OUT LIKE YOU SAY, TONY!



And NEXT DAY...

LOOK, TONY...
SOME OF THE
NATIVES COMING
DOWN TO
MEET US!

DON'T GET
NERVOUS...
I CAN
HANDLE
THESE
SAVAGES!

WE GREET YOU,
STRANGERS! ME
OGANI! SPEAK SOME
ENGLISH! WELCOME!
MAYBE CAN DO
TRADE!

I'LL MAKE
HIM UNDERSTAND
WHO'S BOSS
AROUND HERE
FIRST!

SURE, WE DO PLENTY
OF TRADING! YOU GOT
PLENTY GOLD AND
IVORY AROUND HERE!
I WANT IT, SEE?
YOU GONNA BUILD US
HOUSES HERE ON
THE BEACH! MAYBE
I'LL PAY YOU IF I
LIKE THE WAY
YOU TAKE
ORDERS!

BUT AFTER THE NATIVES HAVE
FULFILLED THEIR PART OF THE
BARGAIN...

WE DO LIKE YOU SAY, BWANA!
MANY TUSKS OF ELEPHANT!
BRING ALSO MUCH OF YELLOW
DIRT! NOW WISH PAY FOR
SAME!

ARRGHH-H!

HAH... HERE'S
YOUR PAY...
IN LEAD
COINS!

AIEE!!
THEY KILL
US ALL!

WE DID WRONG
TO TRUST THE
WICKED ONES!

DON'T KILL
'EM ALL! WE
NEED THE
OTHERS TO
WORK FOR
US!

ABOUT TIME TO
TEACH THESE
BOOBS A
LESSON!

And FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS...

THEY BETTER WORK HARD!
PRETTY SOON WE'LL BE
MAKING MORE DOUGH
THAN WE EVER DID
IN THE STATES!

YOU'RE
SMART, HON!
MAKING
THEM WORK
AND BUILD
US HUTS!

AND THOSE FOOLS
TRIED TO DEPORT
ME! I OUGHT TO
WRITE 'EM A NOTE
OF THANKS!

HAH! NO
HOUSING
SHORTAGE
HERE IN THE
JUNGLE!

THAT NIGHT DEEP IN THE JUNGLE...

I, TONAKA WILL LEAD YOU TO FIGHT THE WHITE DEVILS WHO SLAY OUR PEOPLE!

BUT THEY HAVE MANY DEADLY FIRE-STICKS TO KILL MY PRINCESS!

I WILL GO TO OUR FRIENDS THE GREAT APES AND ASK THEM TO BE OUR ALLIES IN THIS FIGHT! PERHAPS YOU WILL FIND YOUR COURAGE WHILE I AM GONE!

AWAIT MY RETURN AND GATHER YOUR WEAPONS, FOR THOUGH I TAUNT YOU TO FIGHT, I KNOW NO SON OF THE JUNGLE WOULD LET SUCH STRANGERS AMONGST US!



And soon Tonaka is speaking with the Great Apes...

GOOD! THEY UNDERSTAND AND KUNAK, THE LEADER, SAYS THAT THEY WILL HELP US DRIVE THE WICKED ONES AWAY FROM OUR JUNGLE!

THE NEXT DAY...

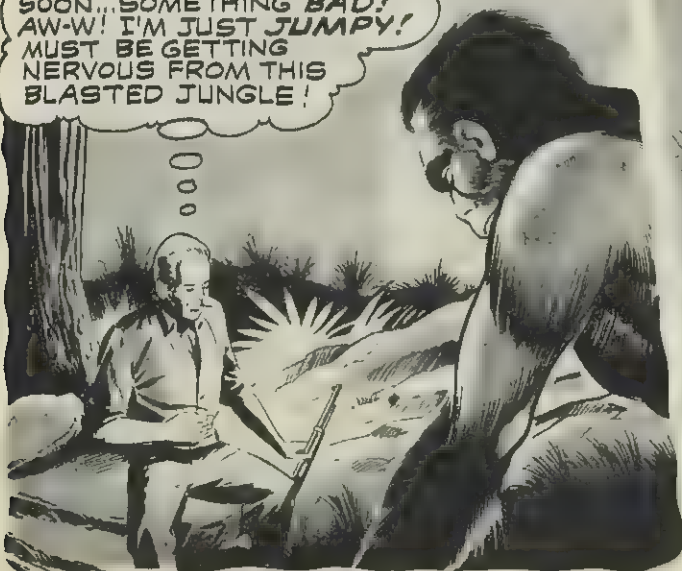
YOU DID WELL, MY PRINCESS, WITH THE HAIRY ONES TO AID US! WE WILL FIGHT WELL!

THESE BEASTS KNOW THAT WHICH IS EVIL FOR US IS EVIL FOR THEM!

SELDOM DO I TRAVEL ALONE MIDST THE JUNGLE TERRORS, BUT THIS IS A CAUSE DEMANDING ALL THE EFFORT I CAN PUT FORTH!



HEY! I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS GONNA HAPPEN PRETTY SOON... SOMETHING BAD! AW-W! I'M JUST JUMPY! MUST BE GETTING NERVOUS FROM THIS BLASTED JUNGLE!



SUDDENLY, A HAIRY FIST REACHES OUT AND...

ARGGGH!



COME, FRIEND... I HAVE
NEED OF YOUR
STRENGTH!



THESE FOOLS FEEL THEM-
SELVES TO BE SAFE, AND
SO DO NOT KEEP A
VIGILANT WATCH!



HAH... THEY DO NOT SUSPECT
THAT DEATH NOW STALKS
THEM! HOW CAN THEY ACT
SO FESTIVE AFTER KILLING
SO MANY OF MY PEOPLE?
BUT THE DEBT WILL SOON
BE REPAID!



YIII-I!
LOOKIT!
GORILLAS
AFTER
US!

YEOW...
BULLETS
WILL KILL
'EM!



NOO... GET AWAY!
HELP! CAN'T STOP
HIM WITH BULLETS! HE--
HE'LL KILL ME...
KEEP AWAY, YOU
BABOON! HELP!



LET'S GET OUT
OF HERE! MAKE
FOR THE BOAT!
WE'LL BE SAFE
THERE!

AIEE... YOU
WILL NOT
ESCAPE ME,
KILLER MAN!



OHH... MY SHOULDER!
NOW THE EVIL ONES
WILL ESCAPE TO
KILL AGAIN!



THOUGHT YOU
HAD ME, HUH?
BUT I'M STILL
TOUGH FOR ANY
JUNGLE GIRL
TO CATCH!

IT'S BEGINNIN' TO MAKE ME MAD!
COURT ORDERS ME OUT OF ONE COUNTRY
AND A PACK OF APES LED BY A FEMALE
THINKS THEY CAN OUTWIT ME IN THIS
PLACE! I'LL SHOW 'EM... I'LL SHOW
THE WHOLE WORLD!



HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON?

SHUT UP AND LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!



THEY'VE SMASHED THE BOAT! NOW WE'LL HAVE TO SWIM FOR IT, MILLIE!

TONY, LOOK! THE YACHT IS MOVING! THEY'RE LEAVING US HERE TO DIE!



THAT'S ONLY HALF OF IT! LOOK UP *THERE!* LET'S THROW OURSELVES AT THEIR MERCY!

ARE YOU NUTS? I GOT MY OWN PLANS!

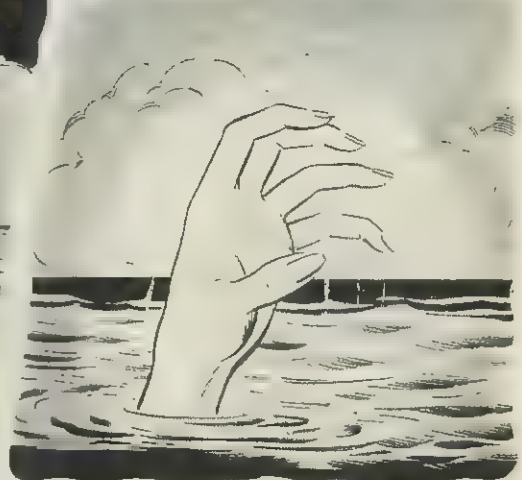
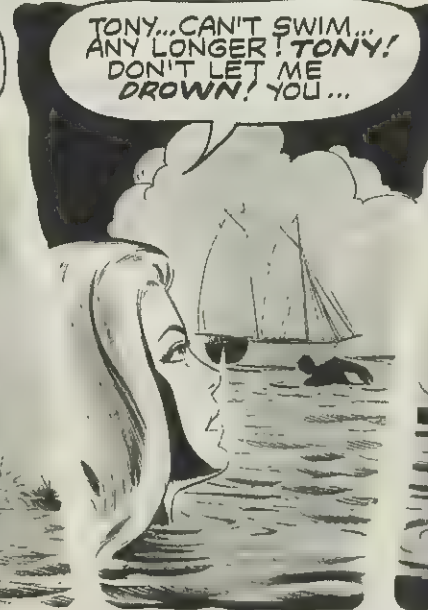


GOOD BYE, YOU LITTLE FOOL! EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF! I GOTTA GET TO THAT YACHT!

TONY... CAN'T SWIM... ANY LONGER! TONY! DON'T LET ME DROWN! YOU...

AFTER A SHORT STRUGGLE, THE GIRL WHO THOUGHT A LIFE OF CRIME WAS AN EASY ONE, SUNK FROM SIGHT...

NO... WAIT! WAIT FOR ME!



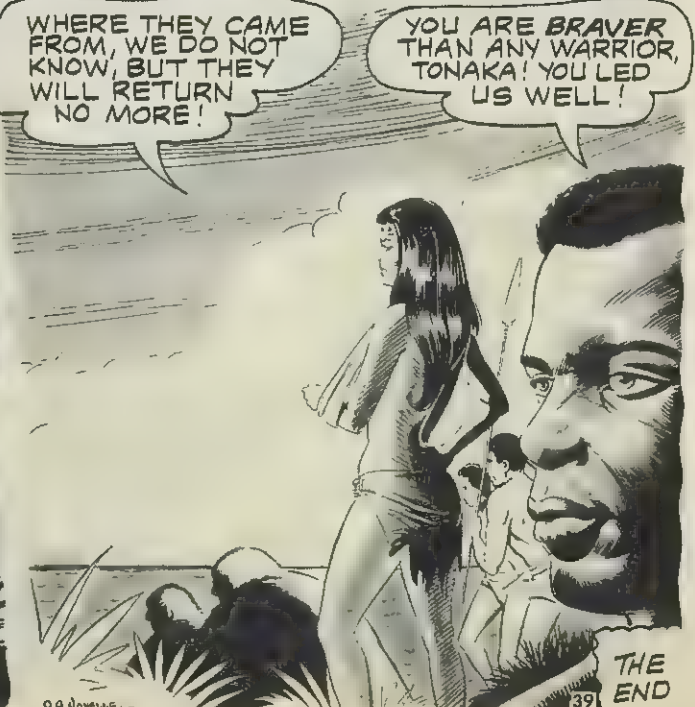
BUT MINUTES LATER...

WE'RE GOIN' BACK TO THE STATES AND GIVE OURSELVES UP, TONY! YOUR GAME DON'T WORK!

NO! HEY YOU CHISELERS! T-TIRED OUT! I'LL DROWN! AGHHH-H! (GASP)... DON'T LEAVE... (BLUB)...

WHERE THEY CAME FROM, WE DO NOT KNOW, BUT THEY WILL RETURN NO MORE!

YOU ARE BRAVER THAN ANY WARRIOR, TONAKA! YOU LED US WELL!



MOST PEOPLE **LEARN** TO OVERCOME THEIR HANDICAPS, **LAWRENCE DAWSON**, BUT NOT YOU! **THESE** PEOPLE BECOME STRONGER, BETTER CITIZENS FOR THEIR EFFORTS... BUT **NOT YOU**. YOU'VE BEEN PLAGUED SINCE EARLY CHILDHOOD WITH BRITTLE BONES AND HAVE REFUSED, EVER SINCE, TO BE ANYTHING BUT **ERRATIC** AND **DESPONDENT**. TO **YOU**, PLACING **ANY** VALUE OF LIFE IS...

STRETCHING THINGS



YOU CURSE, EVEN THOUGH THE PHONE AWAKENS YOU FROM A TROUBLED SLEEP. IT'S YOUR DOCTOR, **JAMES BOYLE**.

WHAT'S AT? YOU'VE INVENTED WHAT?... IMPOSSIBLE! NOTHING CAN STOP MY BONES FROM BREAKING! ... ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT, I'LL DROP BY THIS AFTERNOON, HUMPH!



YOUR APPOINTMENT TIME COMES, BUT YOU'RE STILL TOO CYNICAL TO BE IMPRESSED.

TAKE ONE TABLET OF **MUICLAC** AFTER EACH MEAL AND...

YEAH, SURE, AND IN TWO WEEKS MY BONES WILL BE NICE AND SOFT AND PLIABLE



TIME PASSES AND YOUR BONES HEAL! BUT YOUR DISPOSITION SEEMS TO BE INBRED...



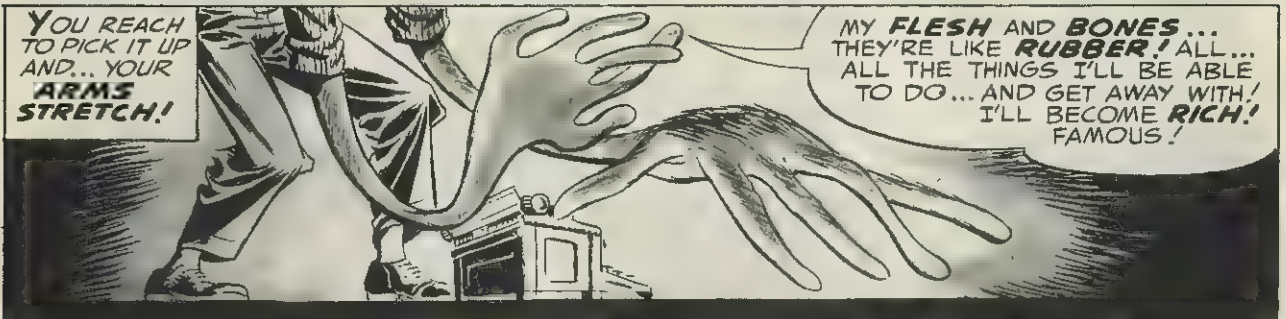
YOU SHUDDER IN HORROR AS YOU FEEL THE TYPEWRITER SQUASHING YOUR FOOT...



BUT THERE IS NO PAIN! YOU GASP AS YOU SEE THE MACHINE ACTUALLY BOUNCE!



YOU REACH TO PICK IT UP AND... YOUR ARMS STRETCH!



THEN, A REALIZATION! THE DOCTOR... HE STILL KNOWS THE FORMULA! HE MIGHT GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE! THEN WHERE WOULD HE BE?

I... I'LL KILL HIM! I CAN'T LET HIM STOP ME! I MUST LET THE WORLD PAY ME THE FORTUNE IT OWES ME!



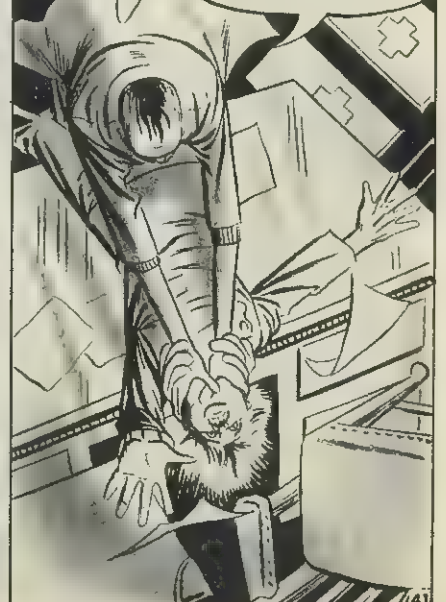
YOU CALL DR. BOYLE FOR AN APPOINTMENT!

THAT'S RIGHT! I JUST WANTED TO BE SURE YOU'RE IN! I'LL BE THERE IN HALF AN HOUR! I WANT TO SHOW YOU... SOMETHING!



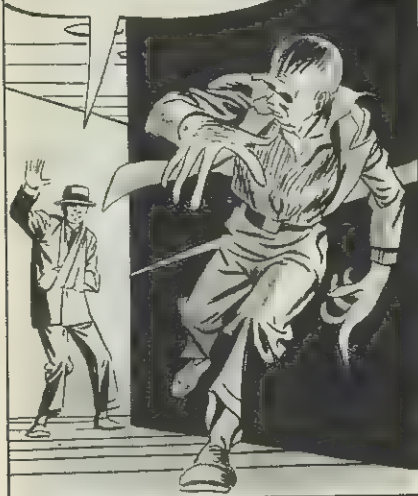
YOU ENTER HIS OFFICE AND ATTACK WITHOUT WARNING! YOU WRAP YOUR FINGERS AROUND AND AROUND HIS NECK AND THEN... THEN YOU SLOWLY SQUEEZE!

DON'T LOOK SO SHOCKED, DOCTOR! IT ISN'T THAT I DON'T LIKE YOU...



YOU HURRIEDLY LEAVE, SECONDS BEFORE ANOTHER PATIENT ARRIVES! THE MURDER IS **DISCOVERED!**

HEY YOU! COME BACK! POLICE! MURDER!



YOU REACH UP AND TWIST YOUR FACE INTO AN UNRECOGNIZABLE CONTORTION!

PUFF...PUFF! WHAT A STROKE OF GENIUS! NO **WITNESSES** COULD POSSIBLY IDENTIFY ME **NOW!**

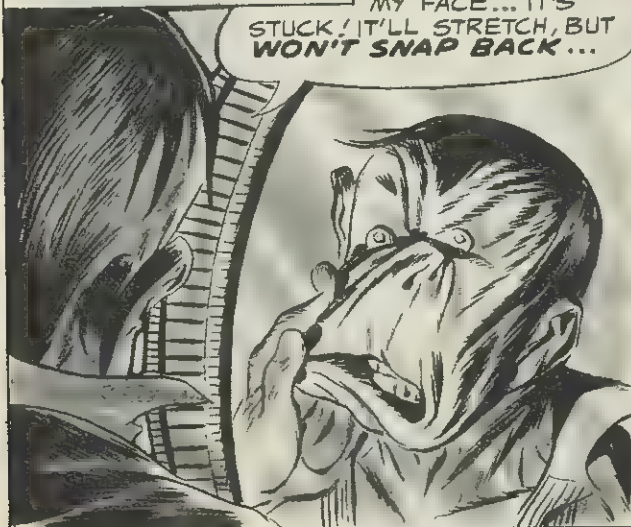


YOU GLIDE INTO A DESERTED SIDE STREET... AT LAST SAFE FROM PRYING EYES...



YOU RELEASE YOUR GRIP... AND ARE HORRIFIED TO SEE ...

MY FACE... IT'S STUCK! IT'LL STRETCH, BUT WON'T SNAP BACK...



YOU RUN HYSTERICALLY TO THE SUBWAY...

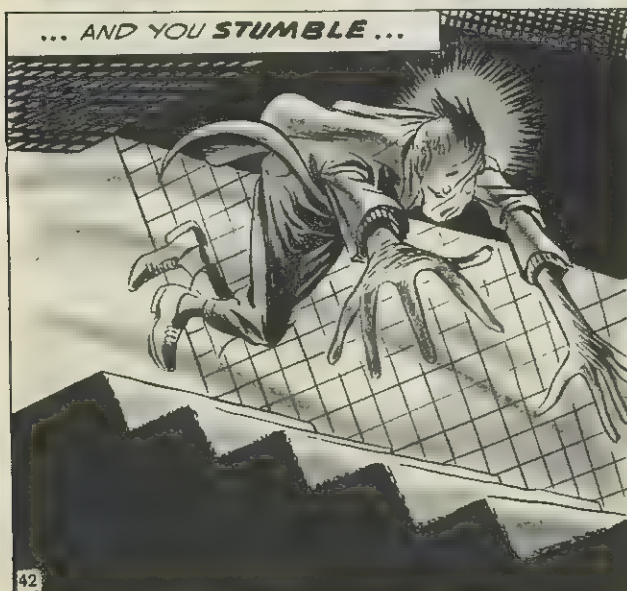
NO... NO... NO!



... TWISTING... CRASHING... FALLING DOWN THE CEMENT STEPS!



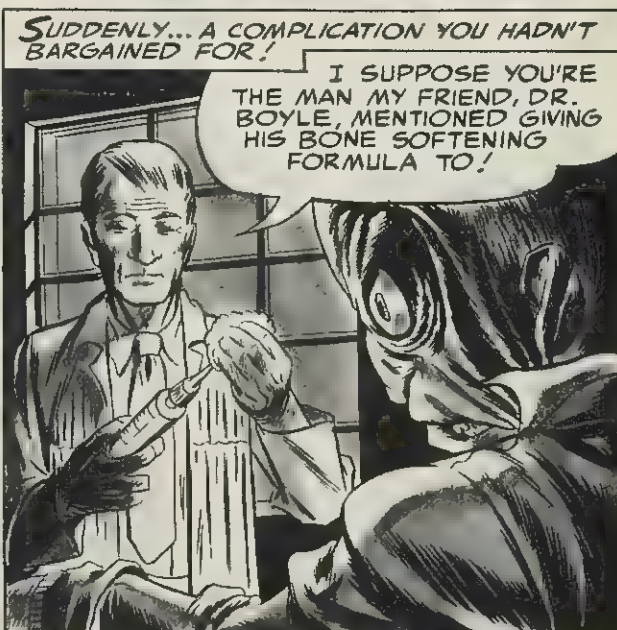
... AND YOU **STUMBLE** ...



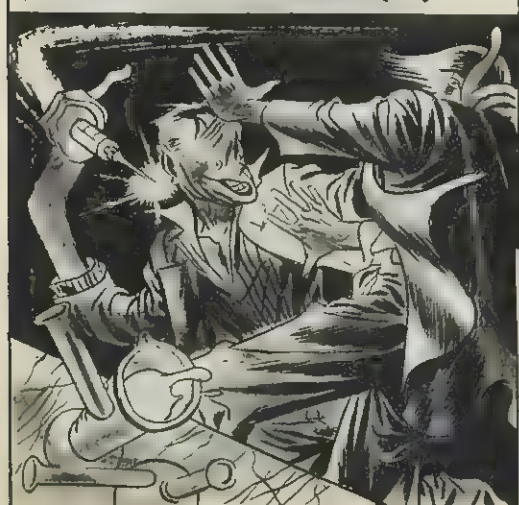
YOU STRUGGLE TO YOUR FEET... HALF INSANE!



YOUR DIZZY BURNING MIND ONLY TELLS YOU ONE THING! YOU **MUST** FIND **HELP**... AND A **CURE**!



REALIZING HE MIGHT SUSPECT WHO MURDERED HIS FRIEND, YOU GRAB THE HYPO FROM HIS STARTLED HANDS AND THRUST ITS **LONG NEEDLE** INTO HIS **HEART**!



YES, LAWRENCE DAWSON, YOU KILLED THE MAN WHO GOT YOU INTO THIS **CONDITION**, AND NOW YOU'VE MURDERED THE MAN WHO OFFERED YOU A **SOLUTION**! **BUT...** IN YOUR **HASTE**... YOU DIDN'T LET HIM LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO TELL YOU THE **FLUID MEASUREMENTS** FOR THE **SYRINGE**! MEANWHILE, THE POLICE DISCOVER THAT YOU WERE DR BOYLE'S **LAST VISITOR**... HE HAD **RECORDED** YOUR **APPOINTMENT**!

YOU ANXIOUSLY RETURN TO YOUR ROOM! A FEW HOURS PASS, AND...



YOU REALIZE YOU CAN'T GET AWAY! BUT YOU **LAUGH**...

HA HA HA...
HA HA!

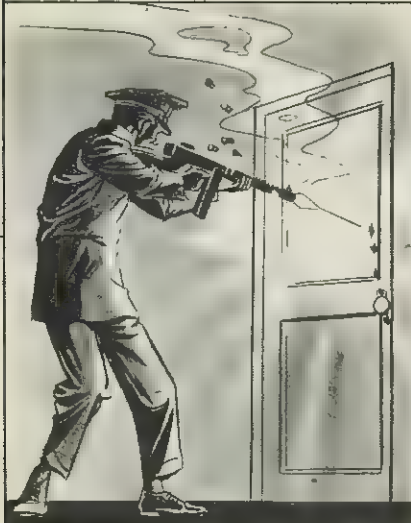


YOUR VOICE SOUNDS **STRANGELY DISTANT** AS YOU BARK OUT YOUR DEFIANCE!

COME AND GET ME!
YOU'LL NEVER TAKE ME
ALIVE...



YOU HEAR THE SHUFFLING OF FEET AND SENSE THE DRAMA ABOUT TO UNFOLD!



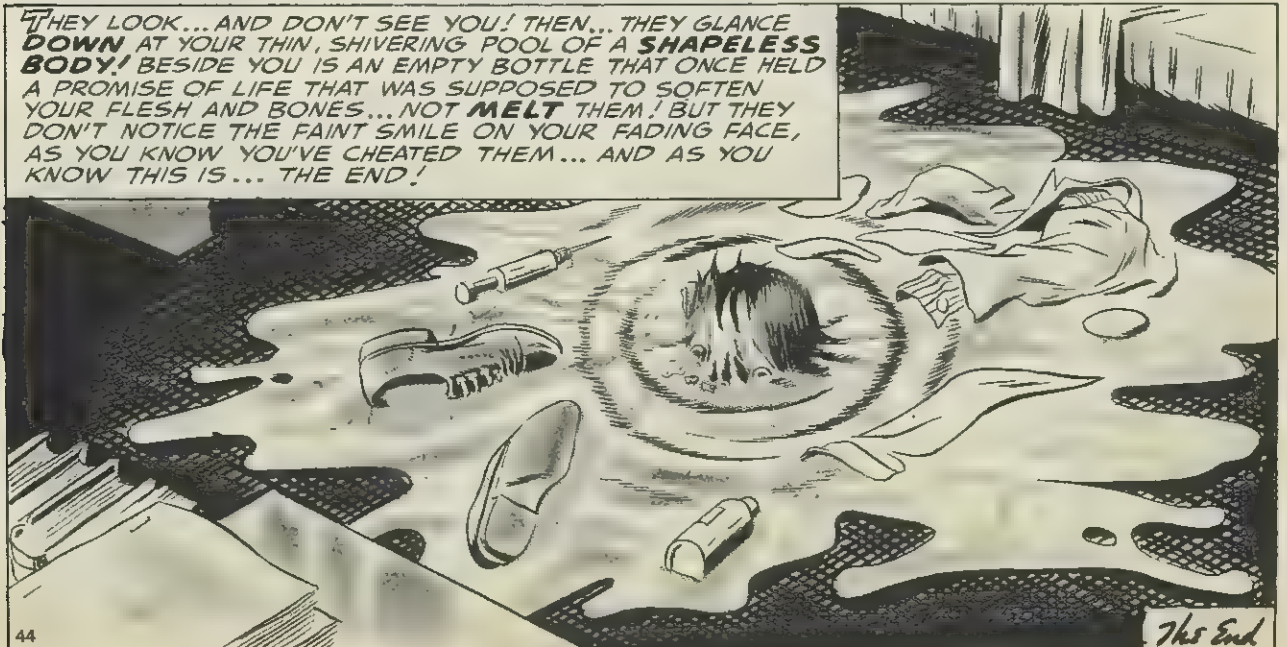
A BLAST OF BULLETS TEAR THE LOCK OPEN...



... AND THEN YOU WATCH THE POLICE BURST INTO THE ROOM, READY, IF NECESSARY, TO SHOOT YOU INTO RIBBONS!



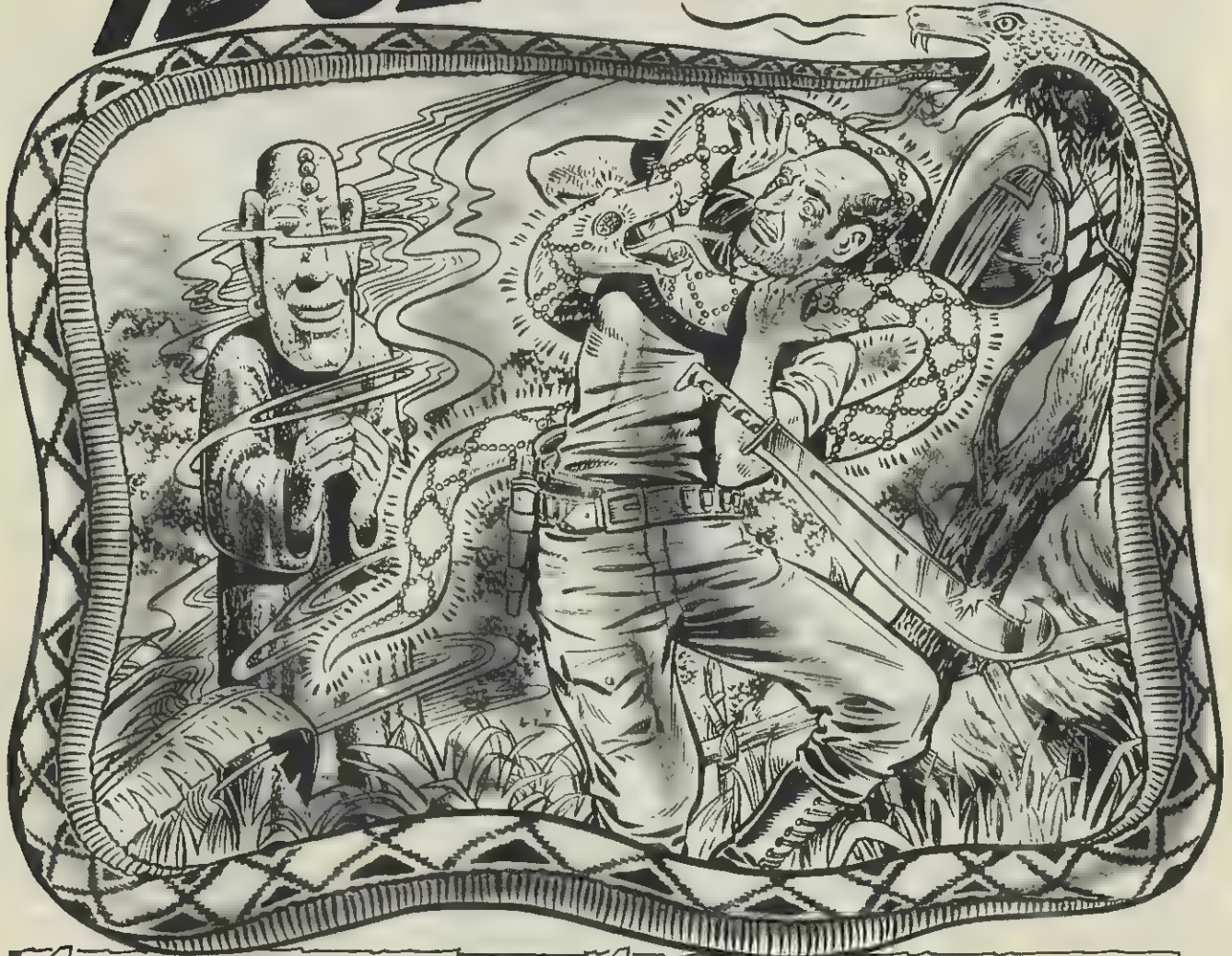
THEY LOOK... AND DON'T SEE YOU! THEN... THEY GLANCE DOWN AT YOUR THIN, SHIVERING POOL OF A **SHAPELESS BODY**! BESIDE YOU IS AN EMPTY BOTTLE THAT ONCE HELD A PROMISE OF LIFE THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO SOFTEN YOUR FLESH AND BONES... NOT **MELT** THEM! BUT THEY DON'T NOTICE THE FAINT SMILE ON YOUR FADING FACE, AS YOU KNOW YOU'VE CHEATED THEM... AND AS YOU KNOW THIS IS... THE END!



The End

FOR UNTOLD CENTURIES, THE GROTESQUE STONE GOD HAD LURKED THERE IN THE LUSH JUNGLE, FORGOTTEN BY THE OUTSIDE WORLD! BUT GREED IS UNIVERSAL AND MEN WILL DARE THE GREATEST OF DANGERS WHEN GOLD IS THE LURE! SO THE ADVENTURERS CAME TO THE FETID, ROTTING TEMPLE TO BRAVE THE WRATH OF ANCIENT DEITIES, AND FOUND — **THE JEWELLED SERPENT...**

IDOL of EVIL



A TRAMP STEAMER PUTS INTO A DESOLATE TROPIC PORT...

WELL, BLOKES, HERE YOU ARE! OFF THE COAST OF SIAM AT LAST!

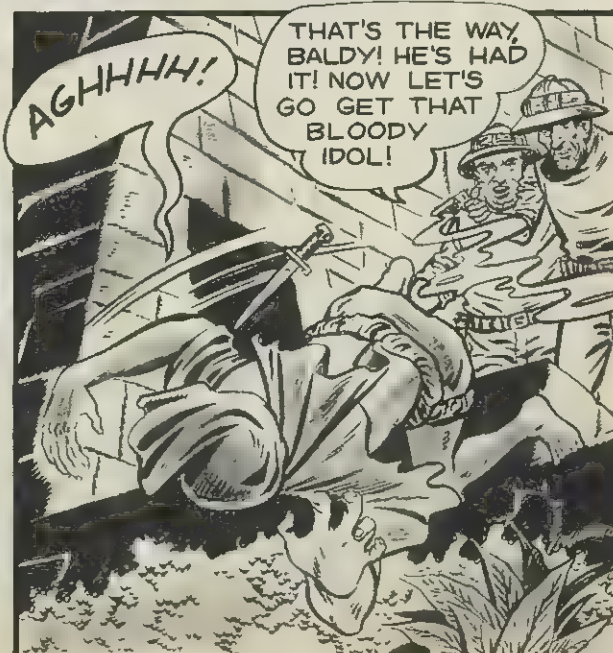
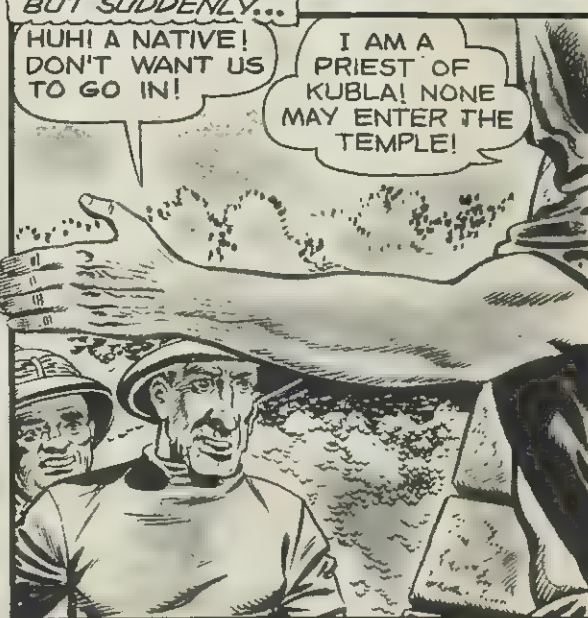
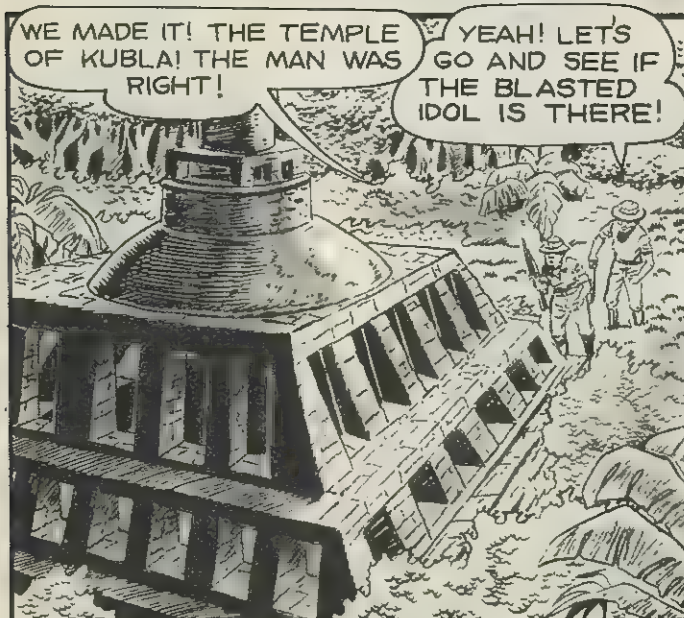
RIGHT, CAP'N! WE'LL START TOMORROW!

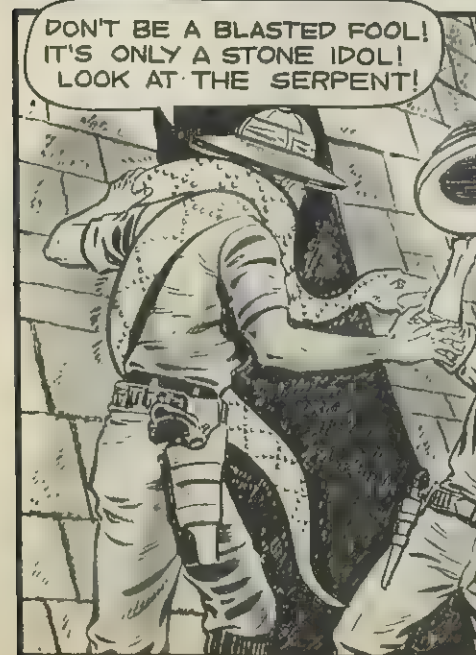
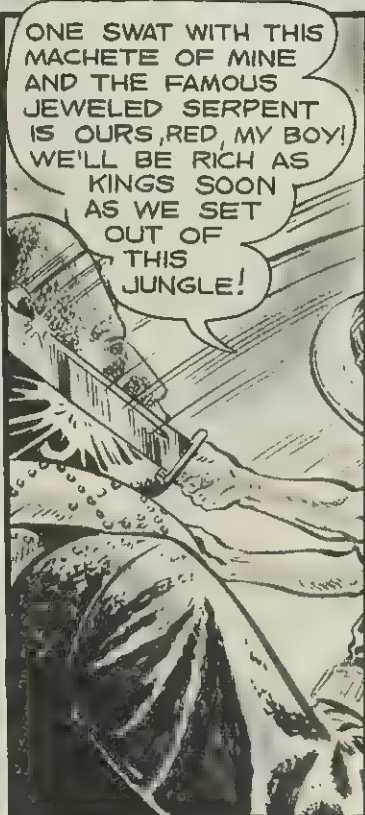
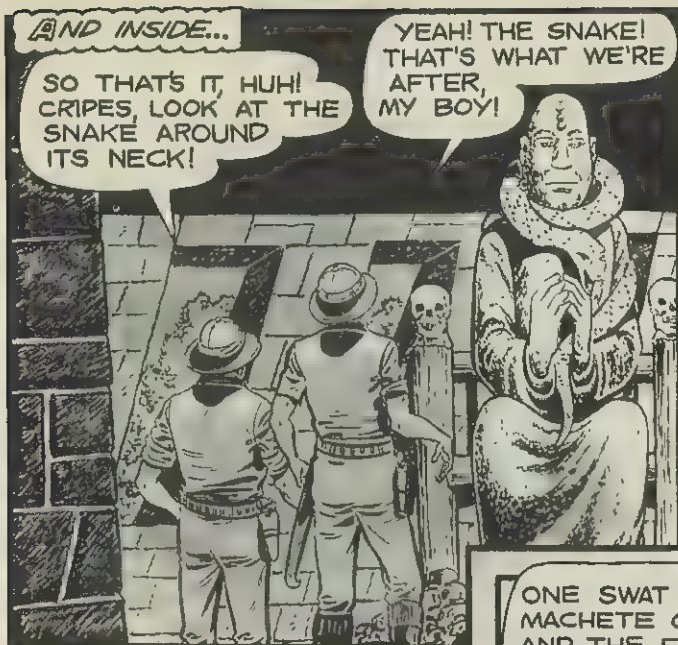
AND THAT NIGHT TWO ROGUES, BALDY AND RED, MAKE THEIR PLANS...

YOU THINK THAT OLD TEMPLE IS REALLY THERE, RED?

I'M BETTING ON IT! BUT NO MAN HAS EVER SEEN IT — AND LIVED!



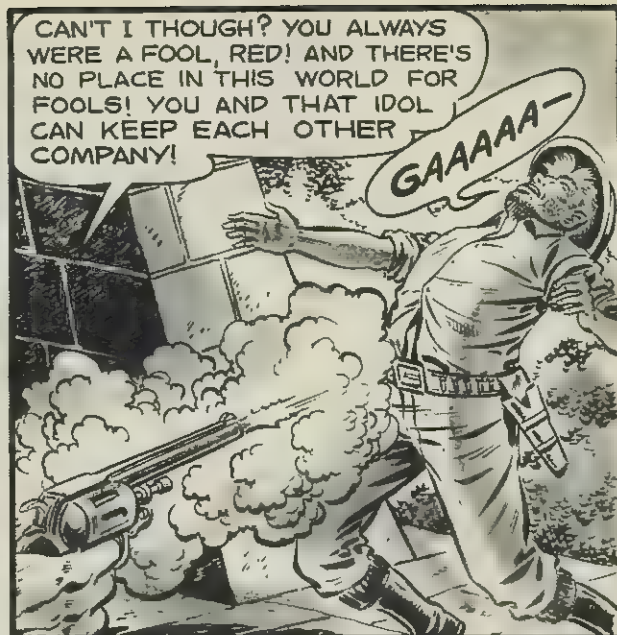






BUT YOU WON'T BE GOING! SORRY, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO SHARE THE JEWELLED SERPENT WITH ANYONE!

N-NO! YOU CAN'T, BALDY! NOT OLD RED, NOT YOUR OLD PAL!



CAN'T I THOUGH? YOU ALWAYS WERE A FOOL, RED! AND THERE'S NO PLACE IN THIS WORLD FOR FOOLS! YOU AND THAT IDOL CAN KEEP EACH OTHER COMPANY!

GAAAAA-

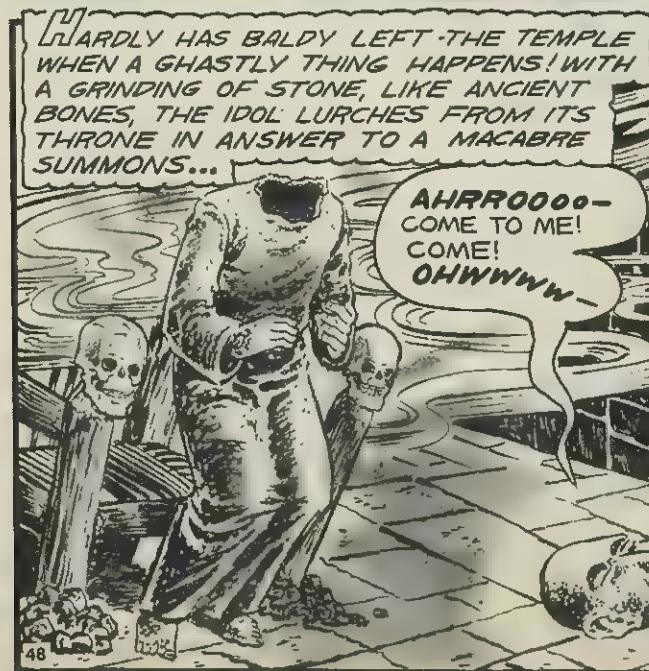


THAT TAKES CARE OF HIM! NOW TO SET OUT OF THE JUNGLE WITH THE SERPENT! THE CAP'N WON'T WAIT FOREVER!

HMM-THE THING IS HEAVY!

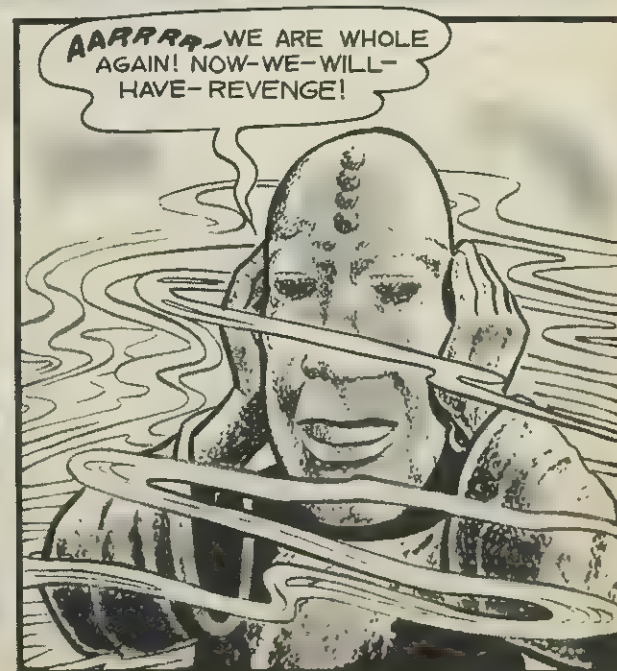


AWKWARD TOO, AND I'LL NEED BOTH MY HANDS! GUESS THE BEST WAY TO CARRY IT IS AROUND MY NECK, SAME AS THE-- (CHUCKLE) -- IDOL!



HARDLY HAS BALDY LEFT THE TEMPLE WHEN A GHASTLY THING HAPPENS! WITH A GRINDING OF STONE, LIKE ANCIENT BONES, THE IDOL LURCHES FROM ITS THRONE IN ANSWER TO A MACABRE SUMMONS...

AHRROOOO-- COME TO ME! COME! OHWWWW--



AARRRR-- WE ARE WHOLE AGAIN! NOW-WE-WILL-HAVE-REVENGE!



BEFORE LONG, BALDY
SENSES THAT SOMETHING
IS DOGGING HIS STEPS...

HMM- THAT'S FUNNY!
THOUGHT I HEARD
SOMETHING CRASHING
THROUGH THE JUNGLE
BACK
THERE!



WE-GO-ON!
HE-WHO-DEFIES-
KUBLA-MUST-
DIE!

SUDDENLY...



AAAAAAH-THE IDOL!
C-COMING AFTER
ME!



RUN-FOOL-
NONE-CAN-
ESCAPE-FROM
KUBLA!



A T-TIGER PIT!
BUT IT
GIVES ME
AN IDEA!
MAYBE
I CAN
TRAP
THAT
THING!



HA-HA! I'M NOT LICKED YET! NOT
OLD BALDY! I CAN HIDE THIS OLD PIT
WITH THESE LEAVES SO IT CAN'T SEE,
MAYBE IT'LL FALL IN! THAT WILL GIVE
ME A CHANCE TO GET
AWAY! WHEWW-WHAT
A BLOODY
MONSTER
IT IS!

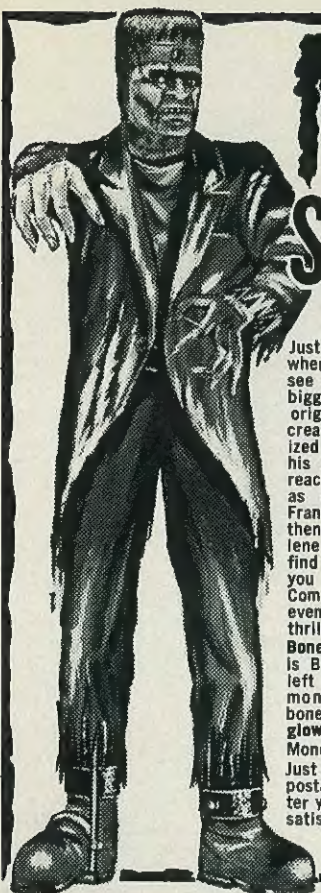


SO BALDY LURES THE LURCHING
IDOL ON AND ON...

COME ON, YOU BLASTED
UGLY HUNK OF STONE! I
AIN'T AFRAID OF YOU!
COME AND GET ME!

KUBLA-
GET!
KILL!





MONSTER S-I-Z-E MONSTERS

**7 FEET
TALL**

In Authentic Colors With
GLOW in the DARK EYES

ONLY **\$1.00**

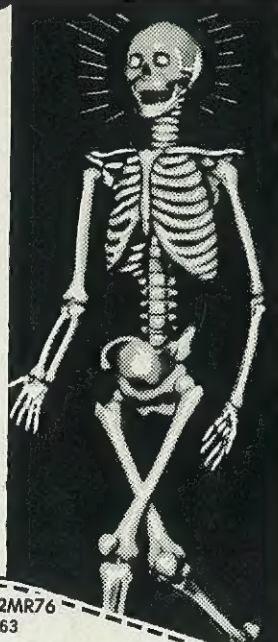
TEN DAY FREE TRIAL

Just imagine your friends shock when they walk into your room and see the "Monster" reaching out—bigger than life-Frankenstein, the original man-made monster, that creation of evil genius that terrorized the world. A giant 7 feet tall, his eyes glow eerily as his hand reaches out—as awful and sinister as the wildest nightmare. Yes—Frankenstein is 7 feet tall, in authentic colors on durable polyethylene, and so lifelike you'll probably find yourself talking to him. Won't you be surprised if he answers? Comes complete with eyes that glow even in the pitch dark for a special thrilling chill.

Boney the Skeleton. And then there is Boney—stark scary with nothing left but his bare bones. A 7 foot monster out of the grave—his bones white, his eyes staring—even glowing in the dark.

Money Back Guarantee.

Just send \$1.00 plus 25c to cover postage and handling for each monster you want. Your money back if not satisfactorily horrified.



Honor House dept 472MR76
Lynbrook, N.Y. 11563

Rush me my 7 foot tall glow in the dark

monsters. Send me ☐ Frankenstein ☐ Boney the Skeleton

I enclose \$1 plus 25c for postage and handling for each. If I don't get shivers of delight, I can return my purchase within 10 days and you will refund the full purchase price.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

New York State Residents please add

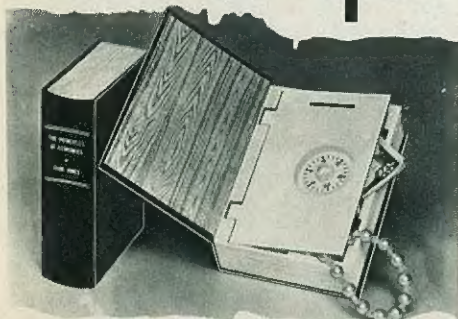
sales tax.---

SECRET BOOK SAFE

With Combination Lock
Only You Can Open

ONLY

\$100



The Secret Book Safe looks just like any book so no one would think to look for valuables in it. But even chance discovery leaves your possessions safe — securely locked by a combination only YOU know — because YOU yourself have set it. Simple instructions show you how. Tough under structure is covered with simulated leather binding to look just like a real book. Just send \$1.00 plus 25c postage and handling for each book safe you want. Money back if you are not satisfied. HONOR HOUSE DEPT. 472BS76 LYNBROOK, N.Y. 11563

20 COURSE HOME STUDY PROGRAM

KARATE

JUDO, BOXING, SAVATE,

Isometric Muscle Building,

Endurance, Stunts, etc.

Only

\$100



Here is what you get!

- 20 best KARATE Blows and Chops
- SAVATE French foot fighting
- Nerve center anatomy chart
- JUDO throws, Jiu Jitsu holds
- Isometric muscle building course
- Endurance Exercises and lots more

FREE Karate Practice
and Nerve Center Chart

Satisfaction guaranteed or money back. Send just \$1.00 plus 25c for postage and handling to:

GUARANTEED DISTRIBUTORS DEPT. 472KR76
LYNBR00K, N.Y. 11563

IMPORTED

LOCK BLADE STILETTO

9" Overall Length

5" When Closed

- Opens instantly
- Sharp and Tough
- Stainless Steel Blade

ONLY
\$2.75

Flips open instantly and locks automatically to prevent accidental closing. Razor sharp tough stainless steel blade for reliable use and hard long service. Money back in 5 days if not satisfied. Send \$2.75 plus 25c to cover postage and handling.

ALLEY SPORTS MO Div.

Dept. 472ST76

35 Wilbur Street, Lynbrook, N. Y. 11563



WALTHER

PPK
22 CAL.
PELLET
FIRING

only **\$1.25**

"STINGER AUTOMATIC"

50-22 Cal. Pellets Free.

Looks and Feels Like Full Size "James Bond" style German Automatic 5 1/2 inches long — 4 1/2 inches high. Fires 22 cal. pellets just as fast as you can pull the trigger with realistic moving slide action. Great for fast action combat-type target practice. 50 reusable 22 cal. pellets free. Free supply of targets. Money back if not satisfied. Just send \$1.25 plus 25c Not sold in NY City.

HONOR HOUSE.

Dept. 472PK76 Lynbrook, N.Y. 11563

X-RAY SPECS

An Hilarious Optical Illusion



ONLY **\$1.00**

Scientific optical principle really works. Imagine — you put on the "X-Ray" Specs and hold your hand in front of you. You seem to be able to look right through the flesh and see the bones underneath. Look at your friend. Is that really his body you "see" under his clothes? Loads of laughs and fun at parties. Send only \$1 plus 25c shipping charges Money Back Guarantee

HONOR HOUSE PRODUCTS CORP
Lynbrook, N. Y. Dept. 472XR76



22 CAL.
PELLET
FIRING

"STINGER AUTOMATIC"

100

50 22 CAL. PELLETS FREE
Looks and Feels Like Real Pocket
Automatic — Loads 15 Shots

Fires 22 cal. pellets just as fast as you can pull the trigger. Great for fast action combat-type target practice. 50 re-usable 22 cal. pellets free. Free supply of targets. Money back if not satisfied. Just send \$1.00 plus 25c for postage and handling to: Honor House Dept. 472RA 76 Lynbrook, N. Y. 11563 Not sold in NY City.



BACK THROUGH THE JUNGLE LURCHES THE STONE JUGGERNAUT, SMASHING EVERYTHING BEFORE IT...

HO-NOW-SOON-THE-FRIEND-OF-KUBLA-WILL-HAVE-MEAL!

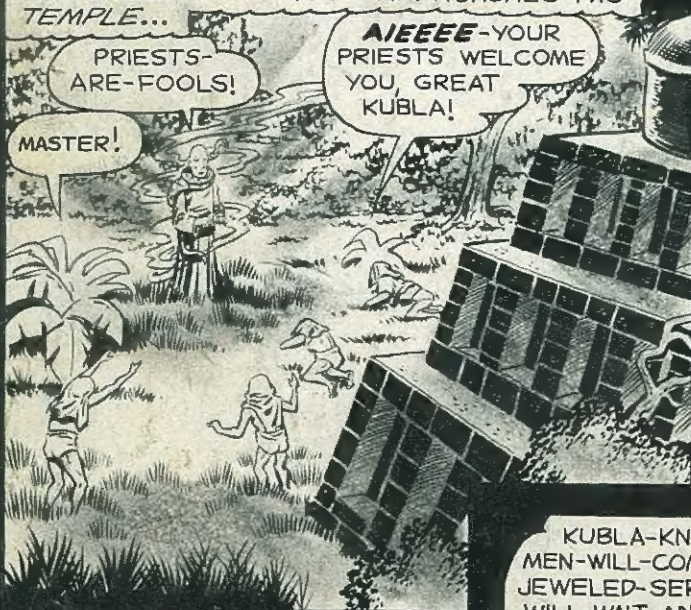


AS KUBLA ONCE MORE APPROACHES HIS TEMPLE...

PRIESTS-ARE-FOOLS!

MASTER!

AIEEEE-YOUR PRIESTS WELCOME YOU, GREAT KUBLA!



FEED-WELL-MY-FRIENDS! LEAVE-NOT-EVEN-BONES!

ARRRRRRRR-

SNAP

SNAP



FOR-LET-WHITE-MEN-DEFILE-TEMPLE-ONE-OF-YOU-DIE!

YIEEEE



KUBLA-KNOWS-OTHER-MEN-WILL-COME-TO-STEAL-JEWEL-SERPENT! WE-WILL-WAIT-AND-KILL-AS-ALWAYS-DO!

GO, THE MASTER IS ANGRY! HE WILL SLAY US ALL!

NOW-KUBLA-CAN-REST-AGAIN!



SO ONCE MORE THE JUNGLE CLOSES IN, THE TEMPLE RATS SCAMPER AND STARE WITH BEADY EYES, AND ON THE THRONE, BROODING AND WAITING-IS KUBLA...

